

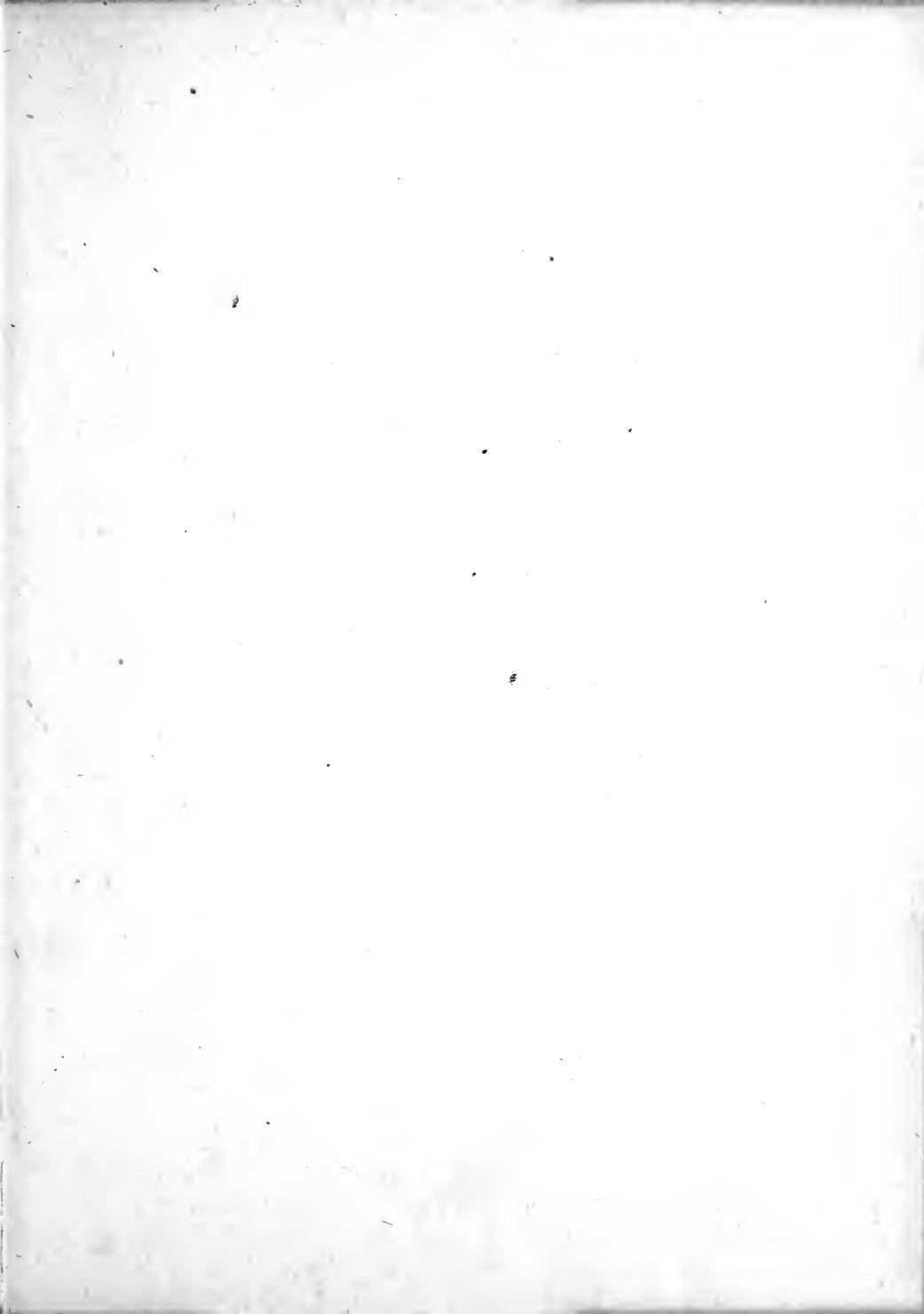


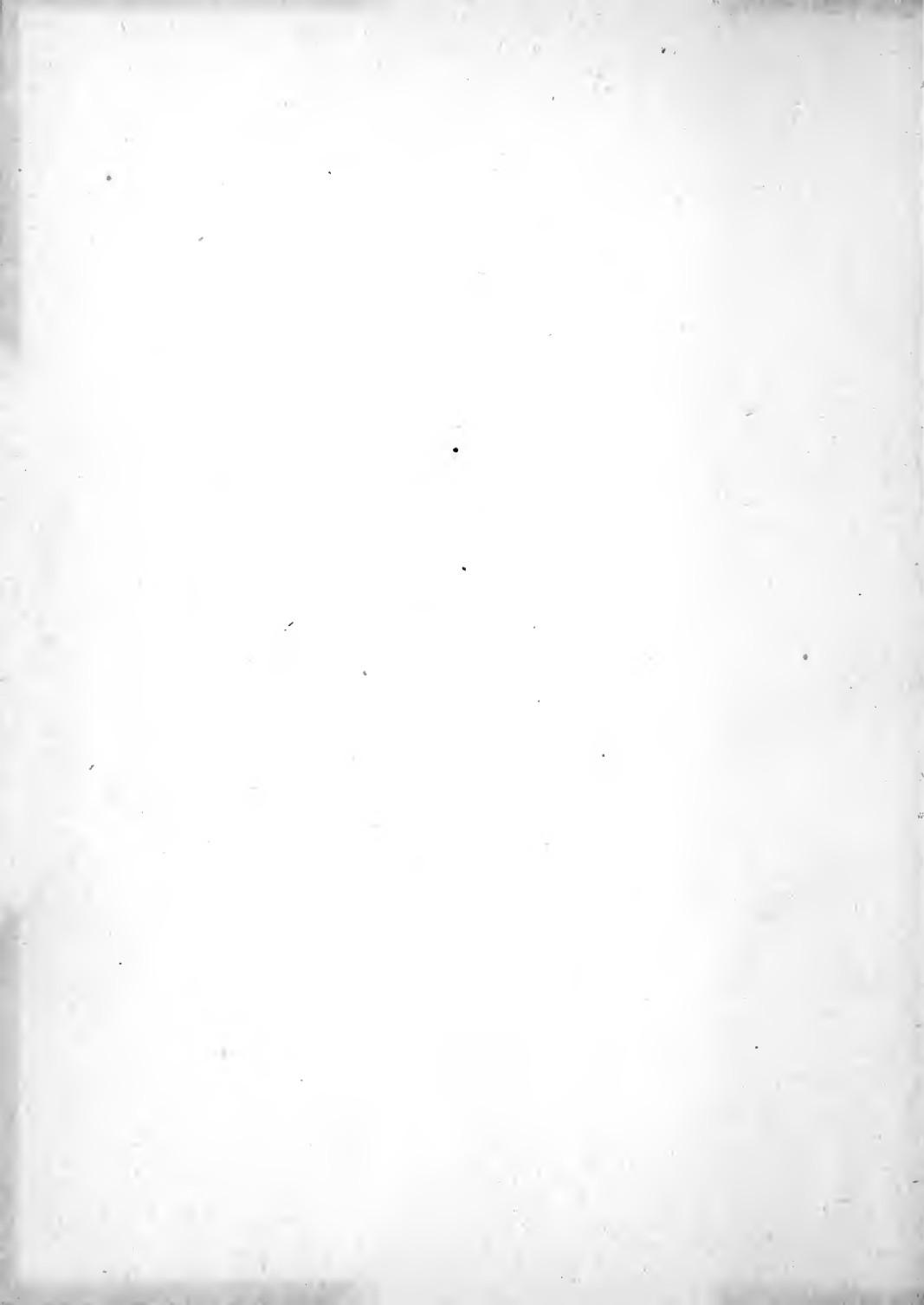
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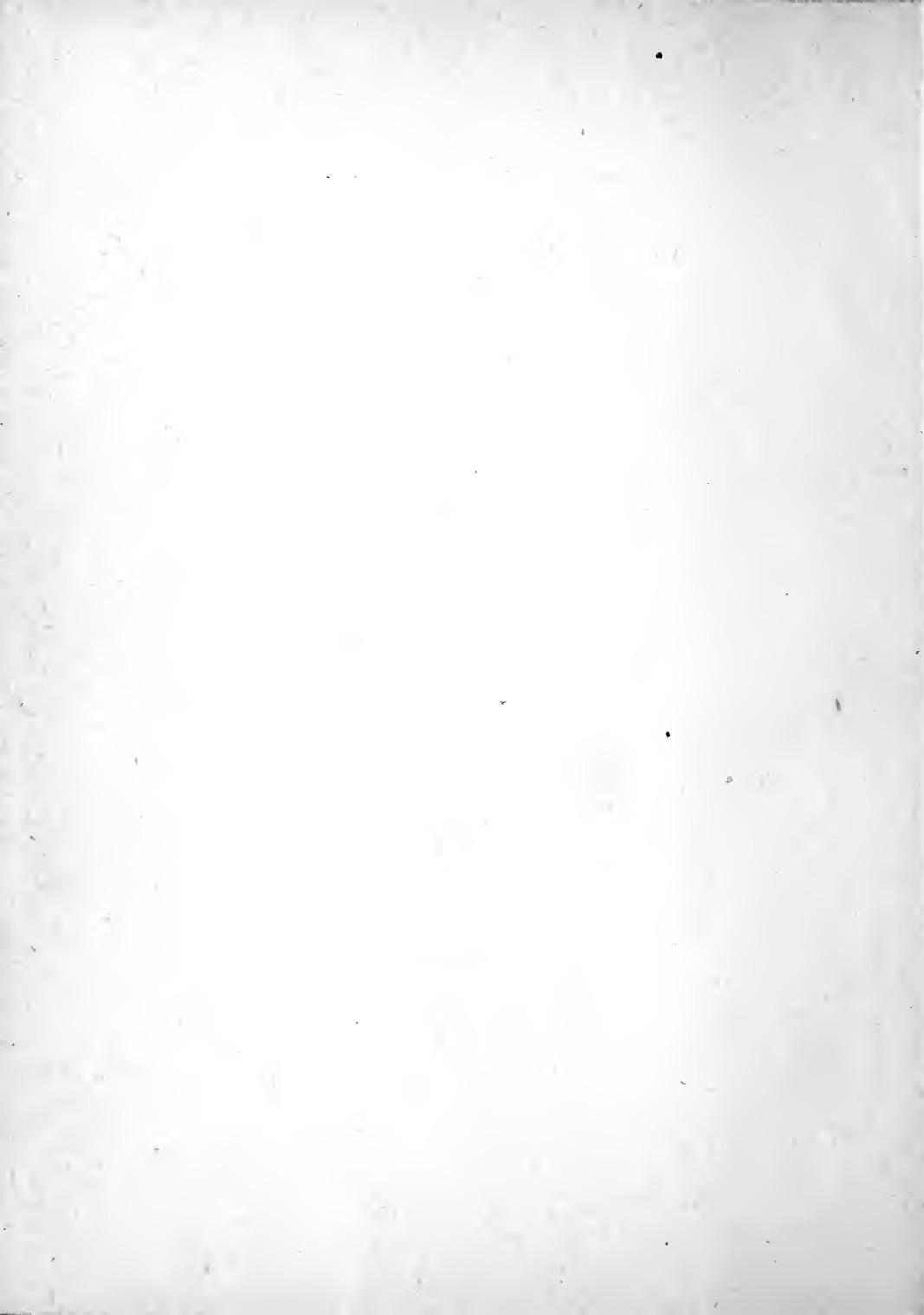
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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.









THE
ECCENTRIC THINKER.
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ESSAYS, ☆ SERMONS  
AND  
SPECULATION.  
BY  
H. M. RAGAN,  
*A LITTLE PINEY-WOODS PREACHER.*

*If anything be revealed to another that sitteth by,  
let the first hold his peace.—1 COR., 14-30.*

*And they searched the Scriptures daily, whether  
those things were so.—ACTS, 17-11.*

*PRICE 50 CENTS.*

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TEXAS CITIZEN STEAM PRINTING HOUSE, HONEY  
GROVE, TEXAS.

1888



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## P R E F A C E .

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It is not claimed that there are no errors in this little volume. The apparently needless repetitions will perhaps make a more lasting impression on the mind. No effort has been made to please any particular person or party. The object of the author in writing this little book is to throw some light upon the most mysterious subjects and apparent contradictions of the Bible, to discourage sectarian strife and also to contribute something towards the moral elevation of his race. The reader of this little volume will doubtless find things both new and old — some he will admire, some that will excite his wonder and some that he may entirely reject; yet it is believed and hoped that he will be paid many times for both the outlay and perusal.

THE ECCENTRIC THINKER goes forth to the reading public accompanied by the prayers of the author,

**H. M. RAGAN,**

Fullbright, Red River County, Texas.

July 2nd, 1888.

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**ESSAYS.**

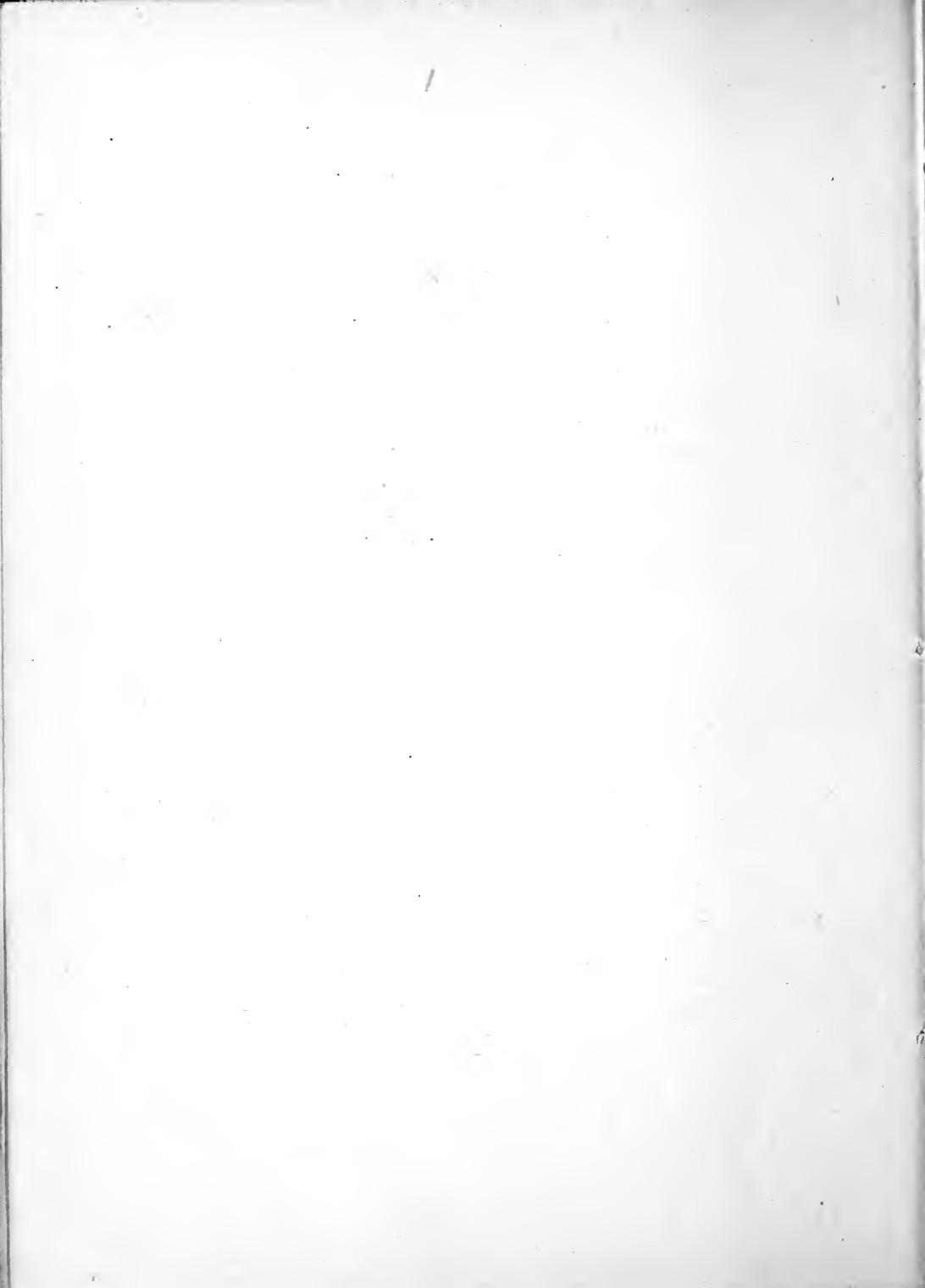
Faith, The Scriptures, God, Man, The Medi-  
ation of Christ, and Salvation.

**SERMONS.**

A Short Sermon, The Sum of the Gospel, and  
the Compromise.

**SPECULATION.**

Melchizedek, the Garden of Eden and Water  
Baptism.



## **FAITH.**

“Without Faith it is impossible to please God.”  
Heb. 11-6.

“Faith” is the *substance* of things hoped for, the *evidence* of things not seen.” Then Faith is a something, and cannot express a mental action; for it is a noun, always having case, and corresponds to the verb believe. It is one of the fruits of the spirit, (see Gal. 5-22) and like love, joy and peace, it expresses a state of the soul; each of which must be produced by its respective cause. Faith, then, must be a creature of the mind—a credulous state of the soul. A dead Faith is a credulous but inactive soul state. A person may imagine that something exists or is true without intellectually understanding the object; but this is a blind Faith, which, however, is better than none at all. Children and simple-minded adults are excusable for possessing no higher degree of Faith than this, if they can rise no higher. But living, intellectual

credulity or Faith must be produced by evidence received in the understanding sufficient to convince the judgment. Then the will orders some action of the mind or body in respect to the object of that Faith. When the heart and affections are enlisted, and the object is divine, it may be properly denominated moral or religious Faith.

Whatever may be the object of Faith, its essence is doubtless always the same. "Faith comes by hearing," and therefore no one can properly believe in anything of which he has never heard. We hear of a machine, and become convinced of its existence. We see its works and are assured that it is a success. We pay our money for one, and thus trust it to benefit us. So it appears that Faith is made up of *conviction, assurance and trust*. Children and ignorant persons are naturally credulous and are apt to believe what they hear. Many from infancy are perfectly assured of the truth of the Bible and divine things, which Faith is based on the opinions and testimony of parents and friends. If a person is inclined to skepticism, he should first study the evidences of Christianity that he may be *convinced*; then by observing its effects on individuals and nations he will be *assured*, and finally by repenting of

his sins and turning to God he will *trust* in God through Christ and thus reap the benefits of the Gospel. "Faith without works is dead;" therefore dead Faith in anything can do its possessor no good.

Blind Faith, if its object is real and true, and the heart (or will) quickens it to active life, will bring its possessor the blessings promised in the object. A message received by telegraph influences both thought and action, whether we understand telegraphy or not; provided we are *convinced, assured* and will *trust* in this science. But intelligent conviction and assurance, produced by a sufficiency of evidence, will not bring the promised blessings unless there be trust in the object. A person may understand telegraphy, and be perfectly *convinced* and *assured* of its practical utility, but if he will not *trust* in the science and avail himself of its benefits it cannot do him any good. These conditions and essentials of true Faith are evidently also indispensable in morals and religion. A person who cannot read or cannot understand the Bible and mysteries of theology, being *convinced* and *assured*, may *trust* in the promises of the Bible as he understands them, and realize the blessings of the gospel. Another may understand theology and be familiar with the

teachings of the Bible, yet if he will not repent and comply with the conditions of promise and thus *trust* in the Lord Jesus, he cannot realize the pardon of sins and rejoice in the peace of reconciliation with God. No one should be infatuated with the delusion that either dead or intellectual Faith will bring the promised blessings of the Gospel. The whole soul, mind and strength must be enlisted and brought to willing, anxious obedience, with no mental reservation of besetting sins ; and then being *convinced* and *assured* and *trusting* in the promises of the Bible through Christ, the blessings of the Gospel cannot fail to come. It is to be feared that in these days there are many Ananaises who mentally reserve a part of the price and do not comply with the conditions and essentials of true religious Faith.

Faith is evidently not an *absolute*, but a conditional gift of God. "By grace are ye saved through (the medium of) Faith ; and that (grace) not of yourselves ; it (the grace of salvation) is the gift of God." Faith in some sense must be of ourselves, since the Lord calls upon all to repent and believe. If Faith is an absolute gift of God, the sinner is certainly justifiable in waiting for a sufficient supply to move him to action.

## **THE SCRIPTURES.**

"Search the Scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they which testify of me."—John 5:39.

The Scriptures, or sacred writings commonly called the Bible, claims to be the revealed will of God, and therefore of divine origin. If it is not of divine origin, it is a cheat, a forgery and a delusion. But who has ever detected and exposed the fraud? Such a person is unknown to the most learned and pious men of all ages of the world. Therefore the Bible must be true, and should be appreciated and obeyed by all. The sacred writings have ever been respected by the best people of every age, in spite of worldly criticism and the combined opposition of bad men and devils. While nations and kingdoms have arisen and fallen and sunk into oblivion, the Bible, in spite of all the worldly opposition brought against it, still remains and stands a living, miraculous monument testifying to its

own divine authority. Human beings very much need a revelation, since every one realizes that he is born into trouble, suffering and death, that each may know how he can better his condition. We know from experience and observation, as well as from profane history, that human wisdom and strength cannot produce peace and happiness, even in this world. This being true, and seeing our animal wants have been so abundantly provided for, it is certainly very reasonable to suppose that our merciful Creator has also provided for the gratification of human intelligence, spiritual necessities and the immortality of the soul. The Bible proves itself just such a revelation as intelligent beings like ourselves need. If this book were plainer it might force conviction and thus violate the freedom of volition. If it could be readily understood by all we would be justifiable in doubting its divine authority, and it would soon become trite and be disposed of as a thing of the past. If it were more obscure even sincere seekers after the light of truth might become discouraged and give up in despair. But in the Sacred Scriptures we find that omniscience, accompanied by love and mercy, has so inspired and directed the different persons who wrote that every individual, of every age, nation and clime may find

suitable heavenly instruction for his peculiar case. The rich and the poor, the learned and the illiterate, the pious and the sinner—each, any or all of them may freely and continually partake of this rich and bountiful treasury, but it can never be exhausted nor fathomed. By seriously and carefully reading its blessed pages and observing the exact fulfillment of prophecy and the miracles wrought to prove that it is from God, we are *convinced* of its divine authority, knowing that no human foresight and power could perform such things. By observing the effects of its teachings, as we see them manifested in individuals and nations we become *assured*, seeing that it has wholesome effects upon all, making them more prosperous and happy. Being convinced and assured by unconditionally submitting and obeying the commandments as therein recorded, we thus *trust* it to benefit us, and then we have all of Faith in the Scriptures, and its blessings become ours.

We may feel sure that the sacred writings are substantially what they were at first, since a continued chain of tradition has handed them down to us. The Jews have ever borne testimony to the purity of the Old Testament, and especially to the first five books,

called the Pentateuch. The Samaritans had a copy of this for several hundred years before Christ, and if either they or the Jews had made any change, the other would have detected and exposed the interpolation; for they were enemies and would have gladly availed themselves of such an opportunity.

Great care was ever taken by the Jews that the Scriptures might be preserved and protected. They were kept in the Ark of the Covenant, which was a chest provided for that purpose, and none but persons appointed for that business were permitted to handle or transcribe them. In copying, it is said, they were very particular to preserve every little dot and mark, as well as the letters. The angels on the top of the Ark, called the Cherubim, evidently indicated that divine protection was over the sacred writings within. Many of the Philistines were miraculously slain when this Ark was in their possession, and upon one occasion their idol god was found prostrate before it, and finally they were glad to get rid of it. When the Ark was returned to the land of Israel many there were similarly slain for attempting to examine its sacred contents. Uzzah fell dead before the Ark when he put forth his hand to steady it—notwithstanding he did so reverently—that all

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might be taught to fear and respect the authority of these sacred Scriptures.

All these things being true, we certainly have no grounds for doubting the purity of the Scriptures nor their divine origin or authority. Since there is so much at stake, so long as there is a single probability of their being true, it is not only unwise, but folly and madness, to refuse or neglect to give them a serious, careful and prayerful consideration. But since there is so much proof and there have ever been so many human witnesses of the best and most noble character who have borne testimony to their truth, in the face of opposition, persecution and death; how can any hope to escape who wilfully slight such glorious privileges? If it is God's book, none need ever expect to understand it all, but each may learn his own lesson and obtain the peace and rest of Heaven.

The sacred Scriptures as we now have them in our Bible are divided into two parts—the Old and the New Testaments. The Old is divided into thirty-nine books and the New into twenty-seven, each of which is sub-divided into chapters and verses. In this grand old book we learn that man was originally pure and holy and clothed with wonderful powers. Not being a brute, but a human being, he would experiment;

he sinned and he fell from his exalted estate. We learn also of the scheme of redemption, devised for human restoration to another life in the world to come. The Scriptures were a necessity for the execution of the plan of salvation, by and through the incarnation, life, death, resurrection and glorification of the Lord Jesus Christ. Man still being in freedom after the fall—necessarily so, being human and not a brute—he could only be saved by the revelation of this scheme and obtaining the consent of His will. Hence the Creator, in mercy, has given and wonderfully protected the sacred writings; and the willing position of the human race in this world will doubtless ever receive heavenly light through this medium; and unbelievers and heathen receive at least reflected light from and through the same sources.

We know of no Scriptures for about two thousand years after the Creation, but it is probable that Heavenly knowledge was only gradually lost, and that the Scriptures, as a medium for imparting knowledge and keeping up Divine communication with men, were not necessary until after a long and gradual decline, when the human mind became so sensual that it was not capable of realizing the divine presence and receiving impressions except through a material

medium. Human longevity was much greater in the first age of the world than since the flood; and it is highly probable that both heavenly knowledge and the history of men and the world were handed down to succeeding generations by tradition. Moses, most likely, was at least aided in this way when writing the first chapters of Genesis. He is the reputed author of the Pentateuch, but it is probable that Ezra compiled and re-wrote them all, as well as all the books that precede his own, for it is said, "He was a ready scribe in the law of Moses." He was also a priest and a noted teacher in his day. In many places in the Pentateuch we read such language as, "Moses said unto the people" and "The Lord said unto Moses," and it is not likely that Moses would have used such expressions. It is highly improbable that Moses recorded his own death, as we read it in the thirty-fourth chapter of Deuteronomy. This might have been done by miracle or inspiration, but it is certainly more reasonable to suppose that Ezra wrote this chapter when compiling the books of the law. Joshua, the successor of Moses may have written it, but still it is probable that Ezra compiled the whole. The Decalogue, or Ten Commandments, is the central object of the Pentateuch. It is the essence of the whole law. Part of these Commandments

pertain to man's duties to God, and the rest, to his fellow-men. The spirit of this law has, doubtless, ever been recognized by all people in every age of the world and it is likely to so continue till time shall be no more.

The book of Job has ever been a mysterious puzzle to Biblical critics. They differ about who Job was, as well as who wrote the book and when and where Job lived. Some consider him a real man, and others a personification. There are certainly more reasons for attributing the authorship of this book to King Solomon, since, evidently, he was better naturally qualified to write such a book than any other. The whole book appears to be a parabolic representation of the original purity, fall and restoration of man. In the end Job's rich inheritance was restored unto him double. God, by His prophet, says of the finally faithful: "I will restore unto you double." See Zech., 9-12.

Ecclesiastes is a curious book, but full of good and wholesome instruction. It was probably written by Solomon, the preacher, during the last days of his life. After proving by sad experience that the things of this world were all vanity and a failure, his farewell and dying conclusion was penned: "Fear God and keep His commandments, which is the whole duty of man."

There are seventeen prophetic books, most of which speak of the coming of Christ and the glories of the Gospel dispensation. These, with the historical books and the law, served as both guide and protector to bring the people to Christ—the great spiritual teacher. Christ has ever been the end, object or fulfillment of the law and the prophets. The Old Testament treats of the Messiah to come, but the New treats of the Christ who has already made his appearance.

The four first books of the New Testament constitute a kind of four-fold history of our Lord Jesus Christ, written expressly to convince the reader that Jesus is the Christ; that, being confirmed in this belief, they might have life. (See John, 20-31.) The Acts is the Apostles' Journal, or record of their words and works. In this book there is an apparent contradiction which deserves special consideration. Concerning Paul's conversion it is said of the men with him: "They, hearing a voice," &c—9-7; "They heard not the voice"—22-9. Now, to hear means also to understand and to heed. The voice probably spake in the Hebrew tongue and Paul, only, understood its meaning—anyway they heard the sound of the voice, but they did not hear, or understand, the voice of him that

spake. This is certainly the most glaring apparent contradiction in the whole Bible; and if it can be so easily and reasonably reconciled, we need have no fears about the rest. The Epistles are letters written to the churches, to correct false doctrines, to instruct the members and to exhort them to continue steadfast in the faith, and thus supply the apostles' absence. The writers certainly did not intend these Epistles as the Christian's law or they would most likely have written it out in full and sent a copy to each church; and further, if St. Paul had had even a remote idea that these Epistles would be kept and used as they now are, he certainly would not have penned such expressions as, "The rest will I set in order when I come." But all these things being directed by Divine Providence, we may be sure that the whole Bible is just as it ought to be to most greatly benefit us.

The Catholic or general church has ever been a kind of school, which has no fewer than four classes. Some of the Epistles were evidently addressed to one class and some to another. This consideration will account for their being so different. These classes may be described as follows: 1st—Intellectual believers, not being born of the Spirit. 2nd—Babes in Christ, just started for Heaven. 3rd—Adult

Christians who were going on to perfection. 4th—Mature manhood, who were men and women in Christ Jesus. It does not require close observation to discover that the Epistles to the Romans and the Galatians are very much alike. Many of the members of these two churches evidently belonged to the first class. The arguments used in these Epistles are referred to and explained in other essays. The Corinthians belonged to the second class, the Thessalonians and Philippians to the third and the Ephesians and Colossians to the fourth. St. Paul tells the Ephesians the very things he could not express to the understanding of the Corinthians.

James, Peter and John each wrote general Epistles, which are full of instruction, warnings and exhortation. It appears that Jude wrote expressly to warn the true Christian against a foe which evidently he thought the other writers had not observed. These foes were wolves in sheep's clothing, "who had crept in unawares." They were not only nominal and dead in respect to the church, but they were fully alive to the service of Satan. Some of them, like Cain, performed formal service without having any faith in it. Others, like Balaam, were trying to serve God and the world at the same time. Others,

like Corah, would arrogate to themselves a call to be teachers, notwithstanding they were both ignorant and sinful. (See 11th verse.)

The contents of the book of Revelation were made known to St. John on the Island of Patmos. These things most likely refer to the various spiritual states of the general church from then until the end of time. Surely nothing spoken of in this book has ever been literally fulfilled, or the newspaper reporters would have published it to the world; then why should any expect a literal or material fulfillment of the rest? Babylon must fall—that is, confusion and sectarian logomachy in the general church must cease; then peace and harmony will prevail, and charity, the end and object of all the commandments, will actuate every true heart. Then all true Christians will be united in love, and by faith meet upon the general and significant proposition, “that Jesus Christ is the only hope for a lost and ruined world.” Then the kingdoms of the world will have become the Lord’s, and the book of Revelations wound to a close.

Christ has ever been the central figure of the whole Bible, every portion of which refers either directly or indirectly to Him. He spake with authority as never a man spake before, nor with

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the dictation of a worldly law-giver, but with power and great certainty, like God. When the people enquired of Him what they should do to "work the works of God," Jesus did not tell them *how*, nor did he refer them to any law, but He simply told them what the work of God is, and left them, as intelligent freemen, to do it or not, as they please. "This is the work of God, that ye believe on Him whom He hath sent." (See John, 6-29.)

The Jews who were under the old law (no others ever were) are compared to minors, who were similar to servants; while Christians under the liberty of the Gospel are represented as being of age and free—no longer servants, but sons. (See Gal., 4-1:7.) Moses, the old law-giver, told the people precisely how to conduct themselves, and how to perform even the little things in the common affairs of life. He talked to them and wrote for them just about like parents instructing and commanding small children. But Christ Jesus, the great teacher came from God, wrote no law, nor do we know that he ever authorized any one to perform that work. We know not that He ever wrote a single sentence, except when He wrote on the ground in the presence of a certain woman and her accusers. The Christians' law, under the new coven-

ant, is written in the heart by the spirit of the living God. (See Jer., 31-33, Heb., 8-10; also 2 Cor., 3-2:3.) The New Testament is pre-eminently a book of arguments, examples, warnings and exhortations. Law does not deal in arguments, but in "Thou shalt" and "Thou shalt not," and obedience to it is forced, if necessary, by the power that originated it. But the teaching, works and whole life of our Savior were in keeping with the central prophecy concerning the liberty of the Gospel dispensation: "The just shall walk by faith"; not by law, nor by minute instructions, for we are to "be judged by the law of liberty." (See James, 2-12.) Christ Himself is the way—the example, pattern or law. He came to show us how to live, how to die, and how we shall be resurrected. His yoke is easy and His burden is light. The Jews were not able to bear the burden of the old law, but modern Christian teachers would burden us with both it and the New Testament as a law; consequently they have it all so badly mixed up that neither they nor others understand the Christians' law of liberty. It is now impossible (at least quite inconvenient and burdensome to some) to observe the Jewish Sabbath, for in cold climates fire in dwellings is very necessary, and if the sentence of death was executed upon

every one who commits a petty offense on the Sabbath, like the man who gathered sticks on the Sabbath day, surely the world would be depopulated about the second Sabbath.

Hence the law of Gospel liberty says: "Let no man judge you in respect of a holy day, or the Sabbath days." (See Col., 2-16.) "One man esteemeth one day above another; another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be *fully persuaded in his own mind.*"—Rom. 14-5. Let us, then, not be harsh nor hard in our criticism and judgment of others, since each must stand or fall to his own master, but let us ever manifest charity toward others, who do not believe and act just as we do.

In the fifteenth chapter of Acts we see the Apostles and elders come together to consider whether or not the Gentile converts should be subjected to the law of Moses. They unanimously decided that they should not; nor did they refer them to any other law, nor did they promise to write one for them at their earliest convenience. If any written law was obligatory, this certainly would have been a good time to mention it; but not so, for it seemed good to the Holy Ghost and them to lay upon the Gentile converts no greater burdens than these necessary things, which was evidently only a prescription for their convalescence from idolatry.

No part of the New Testament reads like a law. The preaching of our Savior and the Apostles was made up of arguments, warnings and exhortations. They address the world as of age—as intelligent adults—and leave each one in freedom to obey or disobey. Jesus says: “Take up your cross and follow Me;” that is, do as he was doing, submit to your lot, avoid sin and go about doing good—acting thus according to one’s faith, understanding and opportunities is certainly all that is required of a new creature in Christ. (Gal., 6–10, 15, 16.) “For, brethren, ye have been called into liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion of the flesh, but by love serve one another.” “Bear ye one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.” To believe on Jesus Christ and love one another comprises the whole Christian duty under the liberty of the Gospel dispensation. (See 1 John, 3–22, 23; also 2–27.

## GOD.

All nature with its still small voice  
Speaks of God Divine;  
And in the Bible we delight  
To see His glory shine.

The fool hath said in his heart: "There is no God."—Ps., 14-1.

While the heavens and the whole book of nature proclaim the attributes and glory of the Eternal God, yet our benighted minds, unaided by Divine revelations, would fail to comprehend these grand lessons. However, it appears that most every nation, tribe and people yet reached by civilization and Christianity has some knowledge of a Supreme Being. This knowledge has evidently been handed down to those who have not the light of revelation by tradition; witnessed in the book of nature, and the spirit of God, reaching their hearts through these media, has indelibly impressed this truth upon their minds, never to be erased by time nor surrounding circumstances.

Where the Bible is not known and read, the knowledge of a Supreme Being is necessarily vague, but the fact that images and many other things are kept, revered and worshipped is clear evidence that, to some extent at least, even the heathen are in possession of this knowledge. Not only so, but their magnificent temples, expensive worship and the time devoted to their religion show conclusively that they prize this knowledge very highly.

When but little is known, even of any physical object, we do not expect a perfect map, chart or picture of it; and of course there can be no clearly defined ideas on the subject, but we can only indulge in speculations and conjectures until more perfect information can be obtained. Think of the wild stories told of the Atlantic ocean and the American continent before Columbus came over here, followed by European civilization, exploring and subjugating until the truth was obtained. It is so now with Africa, but we may reasonably hope soon to have correct maps and a well-defined idea of the whole continent. Reasoning from a worldly standpoint, we may therefore conclude and hope that the heathen world will receive more light on this subject, when they, by the exercise of their volition, shall have proven themselves

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worthy custodians or receptacles of so valuable a treasury. After the transgression, when Adam's mind was becoming shrouded in sinful darkness, he was not considered a worthy custodian of the tree of life. He might have eaten its fruit and thus perpetuated his sinful life—making salvation impossible. Therefore, the Lord in mercy drove him out and protected the tree by an angelic guard, armed with the flaming Word. From this fact, the divine Providence and the wonderful love of God for a sinful world, we may reasonably conclude that there are good and merciful reasons why the heathen have not, thus far, received a more correct knowledge of the true and living God. They might have trampled this "pearl of great price" under their unhallowed feet, and been worse off than they are now.

Evidently the manifestations of the Divine Being to human intelligence depends to a great extent upon the mental and spiritual state of those who receive and retain this knowledge. Furthermore, the idea of God possessed by each individual is formed and colored largely by his own peculiar characteristics and general bent of mind.

A revengeful person is apt to dwell very much on the wrath of God. He serves God more from

fear than love. Mount Sinai is generally in full view, and he trembles as he beholds the wrathful appearance of the Almighty God. A yawning hell and the worm that never dies keeps him in the fear of God—without these he might not be religious at all. A person kindly disposed delights in thinking and talking of the goodness and mercy of his kind Heavenly Father. He serves the Lord more from love than fear. A lover of learning is more apt to dwell on the wisdom of God. He has much pleasure in seeing the reasons why. He deals in arguments, and draws his conclusions accordingly. In Peter, John and Paul we may readily see these three characters strikingly portrayed. The Israelites were a sensual, stubborn and stiff-necked race of people, and perhaps nothing short of the fearful manifestation of Deity on Mount Sinai would have properly affected them.

Even Christians of our own days are obvious exhibitions of these universal laws on this subject. Surely one of the peculiar characteristics of the present as well as past generations is fickleness or instability—a slack, irregular way of speaking and acting; and in keeping with this peculiarity, the Lord is considered like themselves, and thousands stand in jeopardy, awaiting for Him to come over to their terms and

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bless them—even though such an act would be incompatible with several other divine perfections. Wherefore we are divinely informed that “God is not a man that He should lie; neither the son of man that He should repent” and that “The Lord is not slack concerning His promises, as some men count slackness,” as if he had said: “I have infinite love and mercy for you *all*, and am not willing that *any* of you should perish, but I am not like yourselves—I am pure and holy and change not—you are in freedom—you can and must change and come to Me, that you may be blessed and have life.”

Nor is this a conjecture of mine, for David evidently teaches the same thing: “With the merciful thou wilt show thyself merciful, with an upright man thou wilt show thyself upright, with the pure thou wilt show thyself pure, and with the foward thou wilt show thyself foward.”

These things being true, we need not be surprised that the heathen worshiper attributes to his god the various passions and appetites which reign in his own breast. Their gods are represented as eating, drinking, fighting, changing and acting just like a frail, sinful, mortal man. These worshipers are not capable of thinking of an Omnipresent Deity in unity. They have a

god for every particular city, art, science, and the different occupations in life. But, unquestionably, this is far better than no idea at all of a Divine Being. They know no better, and of course they cannot be expected to believe and act like those who are more highly favored with Divine light on this subject. If they do the best they can under surrounding circumstances, we may conclude, arguing from the mercy of our Heavenly Father, that it will be well with them in the world to come. St. Paul says: "For when the Gentiles, which have not the law (or light on divine subjects) do by nature the things contained in the law, these having not the law, are a law unto themselves, which show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the meanwhile accusing or excusing one another."

But after all, many of them are not so ignorant as some would make us believe; for their writings contain much wholesome moral instruction, notwithstanding the great amount of foolishness and superstition with which it is blended.

But in the Bible we find the true and living God exhibited in all his beauty, loveliness and grandeur. "Man by wisdom knew not God," but it has pleased Him to reveal Himself to His intelli-

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gent creatures at various times and in different ways. But as "no man hath at any time seen Him," and as He is a spirit and perfect in every respect whatsoever, and as man is mortal, finite and depraved, we can only think of Him and know Him by His attributes as they are revealed to us in the Bible and works of nature.

The God of the Bible is omniscient—that is, He knows all things. He sees the end from the beginning. With Him there is neither past nor future, but one eternal now. He knew His free creature—man—would sin, fall and entail misery and death upon his posterity to the end of time. Well for us that He knew this, for, seeing man's fallen, helpless state before he was created, He, in great mercy, provided a remedy for his restoration in the person of our Lord Jesus Christ; therefore we read of Jesus as a Lamb, slain from the foundation of the world. Even the hairs of our heads are numbered, and not a sparrow falls to the ground without His notice. "Known unto God are all His works from the beginning of the world."

Our God is omnipotent—that is, He hath all power. He can do all things that are consistent with Himself. The Bible informs us that it is impossible for God to lie; therefore we may with due reverence say that He can do nothing

which is inconsistent with His own divine perfections. Surely He cannot destroy Himself nor change truth into error nor error into truth. There never was a time when five times five made any number except twenty-five. We might call it thirty, forty, or any other number, but the truth would, nevertheless, be unchanged. I apprehend that truth is eternal and immutable, and if so, it can be neither changed nor destroyed. Man is certainly a free moral agent, and while God is omnipotent, He is also immutable; therefore, it is certainly unreasonable to suppose that the Almighty can save an impenitent sinner, to raise a person from sinful pollution to a state of holiness, without the consent of his will would evidently be equivalent to his destruction as a human being. All through the Bible we see that God respects the free agency of man, and while He is omnipotent and wills not the death of any, He calls upon man to repent and *come back* to his favor; never using coercion, but is ever kind and long-suffering toward His sinful, free creatures. These facts being constantly borne in mind, we would not be so apt to jeopardize our own happiness by waiting for omnipotence to accomplish something for us which is inconsistent with the other divine attributes. If we are wholly committed to

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God and His spirit dwells in us, we may say with St. Paul: "I can do all things through Christ strengthening me"; that is, all things which the Lord would have me to accomplish.

Omnipresence is another divine attribute. God is present everywhere, while He beholds the minutæ of the whole universe. He is present with each individual. We cannot hide from His presence, even though we should flee to the most remote and obscure portions of the earth, and if we should rise up to Heaven or sink down into hell, we could not evade his omnipresence. "Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in His sight, for all things are opened before Him with whom we have to do." Men may wish there was no God and try to forget Him, and may even express doubts of His existence, but in their quiet moments, notwithstanding all their efforts to escape from the Divine presence, the still, small voice within is saying: "Thou, God, seest me." But as God is a spirit, we should not think of His omnipresence as we do the presence of a human being. David says: "The Lord God is a sun." Now the sun is present by its light and heat throughout its whole realm; so God is present in every portion of the universe by the exhibition of his love, grace, wisdom and power. The earth turns itself round

the sun and there is partial darkness, but still it receives some reflected light from other planets; so man, being a free agent, may turn himself from the wisdom, love and mercy of God, plunge into sinful pleasures, refuse or neglect to read the Bible, and even scoff at divine worship, but still "the Lord God is a sun" to him, and pours into his heart at least reflected rays of the divine light. Let no one deceive himself and say with the fool: "There is no God."

In thinking of the Lord our God and His wonderful works, we should never forget His immutability. He says of Himself: "I change not." Since God is omnipotent, and knows all things, does what He pleases, and is only pleased to do what is best, right and according to truth; therefore, there can be no necessity for him ever to change in any respect whatsoever. He is the same unchangeable God, "yesterday, to-day and forever." Indeed it seems that this attribute, together with love and mercy, has saved mankind from utter destruction, for the Lord by His prophet says: "I am the Lord—I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed." True, he created man and pronounced him very good, gave him a delightful home with the command to dress and keep the garden; yet after the transgression He drove him from the gar-

den and prohibited his access to the tree of life, and when the children of men had multiplied upon the earth and become quite sinful and rebellious, it is said that God repented that He had made man upon the earth; while it is written in another place: “God is not a man that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should *repent*.” It is also said that God is angry with the wicked every day, but we read elsewhere that “God is love,” and that God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten son to provide salvation for sinful man. Now, all this does, indeed, seem as if God were changeable, and that he did change from love to anger and from anger to love. But since God is omniscient, and of course knew the destiny of all things even before man was created, were such a thing possible, it does, in the modern acceptation of the term, seem unreasonable that the Lord should repent of man’s creation. By examining other texts of Scripture, we may obtain more light on this mysterious subject.

Joshua commanded the sun to stand still, and we are told that it obeyed him. But it is a known fact that the sun, in respect to our earth, never moves. Nevertheless we continue to say the sun rises and sets. Jesus called himself the son of man because he appeared like other

men, but in truth he was the son of the Eternal God. From these and other portions of Scripture, we learn that the Bible sometimes expresses itself according to the understanding of those to whom it is addressed. To rebellious, sinful man, God appears to be angry. From a worldly standpoint, it is very properly denominated anger, but as viewed in the light of Heaven it is all love and mercy. A wicked, rebellious and incorrigible son forsakes the parental roof, goes into a foreign country, and tells the inhabitants of that country that his parents are angry with him, and were so hard on him that he was compelled to leave home. The parents love him devotedly, notwithstanding all his faults; and desiring his welfare, would make any sacrifice to win him back to their loving embrace. So with us and our Father in Heaven. Man became sinful and rebellious, was afraid, and ran from his Creator. He spake of Him as a God who takes vengeance, and thought the Lord was only seeking him that he might be punished. But God, in exhibition of His fatherly love and mercy, sought His rebellious children, found them, bought and redeemed them by presenting to their captor—Death—“the unspeakable gift.” Surely, our Father changes not, but has loved us most wonderfully all the time. It is some-

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times said that God was angry with man because of his transgressions, and would have destroyed the whole race but for the merciful interposition and mediation of our Lord Jesus Christ. But if this idea was strictly correct, surely the Savior would never have said: "God so *loved* the world that He gave His only begotten son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." But something like the following would have conveyed the idea: "God was so *angry* with the world that He would have destroyed it but for my mediation and intercession." But the truth is, God had said: "In the day thou eatest thereof (the forbidden fruit) thou shalt surely die." Certainly there is no condition either expressed or understood. Man must die, or God's decree be changed. Christ does not save us from suffering death, the penalty of the broken law, but He promises a new life—a life from the dead—as we all well know from our own experience and observation, and also from the following texts of Scripture: "Dust thou art and unto dust shalt thou return." "As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." Thus explained and understood, the immutability of God is vindicated, and we are better enabled to ap-

preciate His wonderful love, manifested in the redemption of fallen man.

The Lord Almighty is infinitely just; and hence all His acts are also in keeping with this divine attribute. "Every one of us shall account of himself to God," "who will render to every man according to his deeds"—"according as his works shall be." No child of God need fear what man may or can do unto him, for his Father "ruleth in the kingdom of men," and all things shall work for his good. But he who does evil should fear, because sooner or later his sins will find him out, and he will be required to render an account according to the laws of infinite justice. For a time "the wicked may flourish like the green bay tree," and prosper in all his undertakings, but some day he will be weighed in an even balance, and will be rewarded or punished accordingly.

But of all the attributes by which divinity is revealed to humanity, none are so dear to sinful man as mercy and love. Omniscience, omnipresence, omnipotence and immutability are so exalted, so wonderful and so unlike frail, ignorant, sinful humanity that we are overwhelmed with their grandeur and should fall into the dust or sink into our own insignificance. Infinite justice frightens us because we are conscious of

guilt in ten thousand instances; but mercy and love encourage us to enter by faith boldly into the "Holy of Holies" and obtain repentance and forgiveness of sins and also a rich supply of that wonderful grace promised by our kind Heavenly Father.

These attributes are exhibited in the goodness of God toward His unworthy, ungrateful, inappreciative, rebellious human creatures. "Despisest thou the riches of His goodness, forbearance and long-suffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?" "Our God is a consuming fire," when His omnipotence and justice are alone considered; but viewed in the light of love and mercy we discover that "God is love." Ten thousand times, and in as many ways, they have contributed to human happiness. Mercy is slighted, but it is offered again; love is spurned and scoffed at, but the sinner is still—and forever—the object of God's loving care. The love and mercy manifested in "the unspeakable gift" of our Lord Jesus Christ beggars all earthly description; but the Savior summed the whole matter in the *little, BIG* word SO, which certainly no earthly lexicographer will ever be able, in fullness, to define. Surely, then, nothing but willing, sin-

ful indulgence can keep us separated from the love of God, in Christ Jesus, our Lord.

But our God has revealed Himself under different names, at various times ; but we most certainly should not conclude that these names are simply appellations of the Deity, but that each one signifies the relation of the Divine Being, borne to His creatures at that particular time. We first read of God—the Creator of all things. After the fall of man, the Almighty God proclaimed His decrees; as if He had said: “I, who have all power, will punish the transgressor.” To Abraham and his descendants He became Jehovah—the God of Israel especially. Pharaoh was informed that Jehovah, the God of Israel, was “I Am that I Am.” Moses said to Pharaoh: “I Am hath sent me to you ;” that is, the self-existent God—not like the gods of Egypt, who owe their existence to some other being. He is also called the Lord God—the Lord your God—the Lord of Hosts and the God of the whole earth—each of which signifying the peculiar relation borne to the people at that particular time.

But under the Christian dispensation we know Him under the endearing name of Father. He was once the God of the Jews especially, but the middle wall of partition between the Jews

and Gentiles has been torn down; and “the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to *all* men.” The other sheep having been brought in, now, “we are all the children of God by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. One is our Father, even God, and all we are brethren. We are not come unto the mountain that might not be touched, that was covered with blackness and darkness, where *The Almighty God* made a fearful manifestation of himself;” but “we are come unto Mount Sion, the City of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem,” and to our merciful Heavenly Father, who keeps constantly before Him, a record of our names, “in the Lamb’s fair book of life.” No particular person, tribe, or nation, has any peculiar rights in this city; for God is *OUR* Father, and we are the children of His loving care. “Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.”

In the time of human innocence, in the Garden of Eden, it seems that man was present with God, and that they conversed with each other, in some way unknown since the transgression. Man could not have seen God with his material eyes, for it is written: “No man hath seen God at any time.” Man being an image of

God, and absolutely pure, it seems most probable that the Creator, in pure heavenly light, manifested Himself directly to the soul of the creature, by inspirations through the medium of consciousness. When these corruptable bodies shall have put on incorruption, and Death is swallowed up in victory, and Paradise is regained, we may then hope, but not sooner, to enjoy such an exalted privilege. Sin removed man so far from God that the divine presence was not afterwards realized, as it was in the Eden state. Man became morally blind, and hence the worship by faith began; and accordingly we read:—“By faith Abel offered a more excellent sacrifice than Cain.” This kind of worship must necessarily continue until the object of faith is realized, and fruition is begun in the Elysian Fields of the great beyond.

But in this world we must suffer persecutions, endure hardships, “walk by faith,” “live by faith,” and “hold out faithful to the end,” that we may, at last, die in the triumph of a living faith, and enter into the immediate presence of God our Father, and enjoy the blessedness of the eternal world.

Notwithstanding “God is of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look upon iniquity,” yet, because of His great love for fallen

humanity, He has not only made himself known under different names, but, time and again revealed Himself in different ways. To Abraham and others, He appeared as an angel in the human form. He appeared to some in dreams and visions. Moses saw Him in the burning bush; and the whole host of Israel witnessed His wrathful appearance on Mount Sinai.

But in these last days, after "the fullness of time had come," and a people had been prepared to receive Him, He manifested Himself in the man Christ Jesus—His son and our Savior, who was born of the Virgin Mary, and cradled in a manger. "On that woman's breast hung the Eternal God," of course, as manifested in the child Jesus. "Through this *man* is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins," is the language of inspiration. "God, in these last days, has spoken unto us by His Son." "*God was manifest in the flesh;*" not one person of the Trinity only, for again we read: "In Him (Jesus) dwelleth the God-head bodily." Jesus says: "The Father that dwelleth in Me, He doeth the works." The prophet says of Him: "His name shall be called Wonderful Counsellor, *The Mighty God, THE EVERLASTING FATHER,* the Prince of Peace. Again: "Lo! this is our GOD, we have waited long for Him."

All these texts, and many more which could be cited, evidently refer to the coming and manifestation of the true and living God, to our sinful world, in, by, and through our Lord Jesus Christ, who was at the same time both God and man. Jesus came as the babe of the manger, grew to manhood, and called Himself *the Son of man*—evidently because to the external senses, he in every respect presented the appearance of an ordinary man; He would not impose upon the corporeal senses of the people to whom He would minister; who thus judge of things by their appearance, knowing the incredulity of their benighted minds. He respected their agency and patiently and lovingly waited until ocular proof of His divine mission could be given. So at His baptism, when the full time had come for Him to enter upon His public work, the people *saw* the Divine Spirit, in the bodily shape of a dove, descend upon him; and *they heard* the heavenly voice saying: "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." This declaration was repeated upon the mount of transfiguration; and Jesus, by various words and works, such as the people well knew none but God could perform, convinced a few of His divinity; and finally Peter, as spokesman for the rest, said unto Him: "We believe and art *sure*

that thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God"—meaning evidently, the human manifestation of God. An angel appeared to the wife of Manoah, and she spoke of him to her husband as the man of God; and, when, afterwards, the angel appeared to both husband and wife, they evidently considered him a mere man of God, and wanted to know his name, that at some future time they might reward him for his kindness. But when they had seen him in the flame from the altar, "then Manoah knew that he was an angel of the Lord," and said to his wife, "We shall surely die, because we have seen God." To them this mysterious visitor was first a man, then an angel, and finally God. Even so, when the disciples of Jesus had seen the dove, and heard the heavenly voice, and had seen Him ascend on high, they were fully persuaded that their Master was the Messiah spoken of by the prophets. As a man, Jesus ate, drank, slept, suffered and died; but as God, His disciples plainly saw Him clothed with divine power, and able to discern their secret thoughts and intents of the heart. He died as a man, but arose from the dead as God. Doubting Thomas, thrusting his hand into the pierced side of the arisen Savior, exclaimed: "My Lord and God." The martyr Stephen died "calling upon

God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit."

Jesus was in possession of "all power in Heaven and in earth;" therefore he says to sin-sick souls, "Come unto ME and I will give you rest." No wonder John, in speaking of our Lord Jesus Christ, says: "This is the true God, and eternal life." Jesus said to Phillip: "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father."

Just before His death, he said to His sorrowing disciples: "I will not leave you comfortless, I will come unto you." "The Father will love you, and *we* will come and make an abode with you." He was, evidently, speaking of the Comforter, or as he elsewhere expressed it—the Holy Ghost, which he said was then *with* them, but after His departure, should dwell *in* them. Long before this, the Lord, by His prophet had spoken of this very thing, saying: "I will put My law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts, and will be their God, and they shall be My people;" they shall not say to each other "know the Lord," for each shall know for himself. So, now, God is present with us by His Holy Spirit, and works in us, both to will and to do. "Know ye not that ye are the temples of God, and that the spirit of God dwelleth in you?" What! know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, which is in you,

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which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?" "The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us."

From all these texts, and many more which could be cited, it seems very evident that the man Jesus, the only son of the Eternal God, (not the Eternal Son of God, for *God the Son* is an unscriptural phrase) clothed with all the divine attributes, was the human manifestation of God our Father—the Creator of all things. But all things were created by our Lord Jesus Christ; therefore He must be only another manifestation of the same ever-living God.

We may further conclude from the passages quoted, since the divine perfections are attributed to the Holy Ghost, and this term is used interchangeably with both God our Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, that the Holy Ghost is the spiritual manifestation of the same Supreme Being. "For through Him"—the man Jesus—"we both"—Jews and Gentiles—"have access by one spirit unto the Father." Wherefore we are now enabled to understand how we may approach God, our Father, in our Lord Jesus Christ, and worship Him in spirit and in truth, knowing that no others can worship Him acceptably; and we can also see why "there is none

other name given under Heaven whereby we must be saved," except the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Having Christ formed within, the hope of glory, we can appreciate

#### THE EXPERIENCE OF CAPT. KIDD.

"Through all this world below  
God is seen all around;  
Search hills and valleys through—  
There He's found.

The growing of the corn,  
The lilly and the thorn,  
The pleasant and forlorn,  
All declare God is there.  
In the meadows dressed in green—  
There He's seen."

"The sun to my surprise  
Speaks of God as he flies;  
The comets in the irblaze  
Give Him praise;  
The shining of the stars,  
The moon as it appears,  
His sacred name declares.

See them shine all divine!  
The shades in silence prove—  
God's above!

## **MAN.**

“What is Man that thou art mindful of him.”  
Ps., 8-4.

Some one has very properly said: “Man, know thyself,” and another, with equal propriety, has insisted that “the proper study of mankind, if man.” But, notwithstanding these wise and timely sayings, human beings are so much disposed to gossip and magnify the faults of others that we may reasonably conclude few ever take time to examine themselves, know their own faults or study human nature. We, too, frequently know all about our neighbors, and are sure that they will cheat, lie or take any advantage of others, and especially ourselves, should they have the opportunity; but we are willingly ignorant that an inspired penman has said: “Therefore thou art inexcusable, O, Man, whosoever thou art, that judgest, for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself, for thou that judgest doest the same things.”

Let us, then, be very careful how we express ourselves about our fellows, but ever manifest charity in dealing with human weaknesses, lest we pass the sentence of condemnation upon ourselves.

Since it is of the greatest importance that we know ourselves—or, rather, Man as a complex being—let us begin the investigation and see what we can learn of this mysterious character. We know something of him as he now is from our own experience and observation, and also from newspapers and histories; but, for a knowledge of his origin and future destiny, we are wholly dependent upon divine revelation. The term Man is generic, and is therefore properly applied to every man, woman and child of the whole human race. Science teaches that Man is an animal of erect posture, and endowed with speech, reason and volition; but we should not forget that he is a spiritual being, clothed with a material body. Evidently these originally constituted the specific difference between man and other animals. Thus we see that Man is a dual, double, or complex being, and is composed of soul and body. The soul is the immaterial and immortal part, and is apparently composed of mind and spirit, which invariably operate together, and alternate in supremacy, according

as the action of the soul is toward material or immaterial things, the mind taking the lead in the acquisition of knowledge of the sciences and all worldly matters, and the spirit, when the soul would feed on angelic food.

This invisible being is clothed with a material body which is composed of bones and flesh and is covered with skin, having numerous and diverse members, each of which constitutes a grand essential of this wonderful and complex whole. Each member always performs its functions well, unless it is prevented from so doing by some opposing force. The brain is located in the head and serves as a kind of lens or window through which the soul looks and operates, while having intercourse with either material or immaterial objects. Phrenology teaches that the intellectual faculties of the brain are located in the front, the moral or religious toward the top and the animal back of the ears. So, in this respect, man is a three-fold being—that is, he is intellectual, moral or religious, and animal. The will, reigning supreme in the city of “Man-Soul,” causes either department of faculties to be brought into lively exercise; and thus, it seems evident on general principles that each individual is about what he *wills* to be. That portion of the brain which is most frequently

exercised is said to be much softer than the parts which remain inactive, and therefore always ready for use, while it requires considerable mental effort to arouse the dormant faculties and impress them into service. If a person is so disposed he can, unquestionably, develop his mental power in one department and let some or all the rest remain dormant; but human happiness and usefulness in life evidently demand that all of them be cultivated and their respective powers properly developed. Hard labor will develop the physical or animal powers, and hence a laboring man is more apt to be strong, robust and healthy. A person should study the sciences and good books generally, that his intellectual powers may be brought out, and knowledge acquired. One should pray, sing, read the Bible and engage in public worship, that his moral and religious proclivities may be encouraged and he be kept in the favor of God. Any person who is constantly devoted to intellectual and scientific investigations, does not labor nor attend to religious matters, will keep the brain active in his front-head, but the other portions will be cold and lifeless. The animal brain not being exercised, he is apt to be lazy, and the religious powers receiving no attention, he evidently exposes himself to skepti-

cism, or some of its kindred infatuations. One who devotes most of his thoughts to matters of religion, who has but little intellectual training, who ignores scientific investigation, and who insists that, literally, each day must provide for itself, is apt to become a religious fanatic. He has no doubts concerning the truth of the Bible, and is equally sure that his understanding of it is invariably correct, especially on the subject of baptism and all the doctrines of his own church; therefore he may be known also as a sectarian bigot. But one who only seeks to gratify his animal propensities, and is destitute of moral and intellectual training, is apt to judge of everything by his own depraved, abnormal appetites and passions. Anything not bringing money or animal gratification is unworthy his time and attention. He is consequently sensual and gross, and knows but little of intellectual and religious enjoyment. Early training has much to do in forming character and directing one's course in life; therefore, parents and teachers should spare no pains in developing this three-fold nature of the child. These thoughts may be valued by the reader and disposed of accordingly.

Let us now consider Man as he was, as he is and as he shall be in the world to come.

Learned men without the light of revelation have advanced wild conjectures concerning the origin of man, and indeed modern philosophers, ignoring the Bible account of creation, are similarly guilty. Some said man was formed from the different parts of the Creator's body. One insisted that the first man must have been created in the mud of the river Nile, by the united forces of moisture and heat. Some attributed his origin to the elephant's proboscis, and others like the wise men of our day, "to a fortuitous flowing together of primeval atoms."

But the Bible account is preferable, being simply reasonable and stamped with divine authority. From this source we learn that God created man in His own image and after His own likeness, and that He breathed into him the breath of life and "man became a living soul." Every living thing was placed under his control as it also remains even to this day, which makes this account still more reasonable. The body was formed from the dust of the ground, and receiving breath from God, man became a living soul.

God said: "Let us make *man*"—not a mere animal, but an intelligent, upright, pure and holy being, after the image of his Creator; and as such the creature—man—was endowed with

speech, reason and volition, that he might live and exercise these wonderful powers as of himself, in perfect freedom—like a God, or in the likeness of God. A rock image may resemble a man—be like him or in his likeness—but it even wants life, sense and motion, the essentials of animal, as well as speech, reason and volition, the higher essentials of man. Even so, while man was an image of God, he was not a God, because his powers were all derived from, and perpetuated by, his Creator. The creature, though in the likeness of God, possessing all these wonderful attributes of humanity, acting as of himself, in perfect freedom, like a God, was constantly dependent upon the Creator for the continuation of these gifts.

But it is said that “man *became* a living soul,” not merely existed, for that was true of him before; but he now became conscious of his own existence and presence with material objects, and also of the existence and presence of his creator. Now, life evidently implies conscious presence and also similar existence, when two beings are mutually alive to each other; death, of course, is the opposite of this. The father of the prodigal son spake of life and death in this sense: “My son was dead, but is alive again.” They were both human beings, but separated;

but when the son returned, they were mutually conscious of each other's presence, and therefore each to the other became alive. St. Paul says: "I die daily"—that is, he was traveling all the time, and dying to some but becoming alive to others. Hence it appears that absolute death is an impossibility.

From all that has been said, it appears that man's original position was a kind of connecting link between the heavens and the earth; hence the necessity of his two-fold nature, that he might experience and enjoy, as it were, a kind of double life—life with God and Heaven, and life with his fellows and the material world. He was a pure, holy, intelligent, spiritual being; and being, in these respects, similar to God, who is omnipresent, he could be conscious of that presence, and thus keep alive unto his Creator. This spiritual man was clothed with a material body, which served as a kind of mediator between him and the material world; it being composed of matter like the world, the man, by this means, became also alive to materiality. So long as this relation continued, man was necessarily happy. His home was called Paradise, which means pleasure or delight. Sickness and sorrow, strife and contention, war and bloodshed, suffering and death, were evidently unknown in

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the Edenic vocabulary; but such words as peace, pleasure and happiness were peculiarly suitable for describing the delightful surroundings and ecstatic enjoyment of the inhabitants of the Garden of Eden.

Man was in his natural element—the presence and favor of God; and he, with the other works of creation, were all right, and each occupied his own proper, respective sphere, and constituted an essential of this grand, delightful and symmetrical whole. The Creator was well pleased with all His works, for He pronounced them *very good*. Hence we see that man in his original state was human perfection, surrounded by delightful scenery and clothed with wonderful powers. Living as it were in two worlds at the same time,—at peace with both—with nothing to molest nor make him afraid so long as he, of his own free will and accord, remained true to his trust in that position and relation—spontaneous bliss and perpetual happiness must have been realized continually. The whole face of the earth, with all its furniture and decorations, were his by divine inheritance; while the sun, moon and stars, with all their wonderful magnitude and splendor, were impressed into service to furnish him light by day and by night. The whole animal creation, from the little dormouse

to the mammoth elephant, were submissive and obedient to his will. Surely nothing was lacking, but every human desire must have been abundantly gratified. "*What is man?*" Why, he is humanity perfected and the personification of consummate bliss.

He might have remained in this exalted state of blessedness forever (or until translated as was Elijah, for certainly he could not have died since "death came by sin" — there could have been no death before sin,) had he been obedient to his Creator's advisory command. But alas! for him; and alas! for us all; for, being free, he would experiment, which robbed him of his rich inheritance and proved his ruin. Man, being left in freedom, did, by the improper exercise of this grand essential and most wonderful attribute of humanity, partake of evil, and he fell from this exalted estate and plunged himself and posterity into wretchedness, ruin and death. From this memorable event down to the present day the history of man is blackened with crime beyond our ability to describe. He was driven from the delightful garden because the delight within himself had ceased and it was not a suitable home for him in a state of rebellion. Even the very ground was cursed because of sin and evil

plants and vegetables everywhere came forth spontaneously, that sinful man might be forced to provide for his animal wants according to the decree: "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread all the days of thy life," and thus realize his dependence upon his Creator. Since then labor, sorrow, suffering and death have been the common lot of fallen humanity. Paradise is lost; and men, women and children everywhere, groping their way in moral darkness, appear discontented, restless and unhappy. They have lost something of great value, and the darkness is so dense, without assistance, they will never be able to find it again.

Cain slew his brother Abel; and ever since then, jealousy, revenge and bloodshed have been cherished and honored by the children of men. Man has shed the blood of his fellows and in retaliation was murdered by his fellow-man. Many professed servants of the Lord have suffered these evil fruits of sin to control their actions; and hence the pages of history are blackened with the crimes of persecution and blood-shed. Even in Christian and civilized nations, the stereotyped laws of castes are almost as clearly defined as in heathen Hindoo-stan. Persons having the advantages of money and culture have but little to do with those who

are not so highly favored in these respects. But they are willingly ignorant that "if ye have respect of persons ye commit sin."

Many are cursed with riches and overburdened with business and cares of this life. They oppress the poor, defraud the hireling and extort on their customers; and the increase of wealth only makes them more discontented, selfish and unhappy. Some are using dishonest enchantments to win popular favor, that they may reach a position of eminence and be honored as a hero on the pinnacle of fame. Others are only striving to gratify their own lust, passions and appetites. They glory in concupiscence, they eat to gluttony and they drink to drunkenness. Strife and contention have ever been common—man against man, woman against woman and child against child. There have been wars and rumors of wars, which shook the very foundations of civil government and destroyed many nations. Grand armies have met in deadly conflict on the bloody fields of battle, where millions have lost their lives and left widows and orphans who were stricken with poverty and wretchedness, with but little prospect of ever having even the common comforts of life. Drinking saloons and houses of ill fame by the thousands, which are nurseries of debauchery,

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lust and licentiousness, have largely contributed toward the wretchedness and ruin of our fallen race. All this, and a million times more, because man improperly exercised his freedom and brought sin into the world. Do you ask "What is man" in view of all this conglomeration of sorrow and wickedness attributed to the children of men?

They are frail, they are discontented, they are deceptive, they are unstable, they are thieves, they are liars, they are adulterers, they are drunkards, they are gamblers, they are murderers, they are all that is vile, contemptible and mean; and they are devils incarnate and will eventually find a home in the dark world of woe, if they are not brought back to their original and natural element—the favor and mercy of God.

But God so LOVED this sinful human race "that he gave His only begotten son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, (eternally) but have everlasting life." "Whosoever WILL, let him take the water of life freely." "Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if *any man* hear my voice and (if any man will) open the door I will come in to him, and I will sup with him and he with me." From these Scriptures (and many more) we see clearly that sinful men

is still in freedom and dearly beloved by his Creator. Of his own free will, Adam, by transgression, severed himself and posterity from his Creator—the only source of life, light and happiness. Even so, any sinful human being—*whosoever will*—may, by forsaking his sins and becoming obedient, sever himself from sin, darkness and death, and be received again into the favor and mercy of God, in our Lord Jesus Christ. A battle was fought in the Garden of Eden between good and evil, and evil was temporarily victorious, capturing *free* man, despoiling his inheritance and incarcerating him in the prison house of death—where the generations of men have all been born. The man Christ Jesus, clothed with divine power, passed through this prison, destroying the power of sin and death; He chained the jailor and left the back door wide open, that “*whosoever will*” may have an everlasting, happy life with God and the holy angels.

In full view of all these things—the prisoner—man in his fallen state, and his restoration to the divine favor in Christ Jesus the Lord—the prophet cries out, saying: “As for Thee, also by the blood of Thy covenant, I have sent forth thy prisoners out of the pit wherein is no water. Turn you to the

stronghold, ye prisoners of hope; even to-day do I declare that I will render double unto thee." He was standing upon the mountain of inspiration, beholding the appearance of King Messiah, who was bringing salvation for fallen humanity. He exhorts the people to rejoice greatly, accept this deliverance and be doubly rewarded in the world to come. As if he had said: "I know, in Adam, you have lost very much, but if you turn to Christ, the strong-hold, it shall be restored unto you double." "As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." All shall be resurrected and brought into a new life, "some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt," for at the back door of death the wicked shall be separated from the righteous, "as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats." "And these (the wicked) shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal." "As is the earthly, such are they also that are earthly." The wicked who retain the image of the earthly Adam until death "shall go (willingly, it seems, as they go to the haunts of vice in this world) into everlasting punishment." "How art thou fallen, O, most mighty!" "Thou has been in Eden, the garden of God—thou wast upon the holy mountain of God—thou wast perfect in thy

ways from the day thou wast created till iniquity was found in thee—thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty.” Is this I? Is it you? Will our parents, our children, our relatives or any of our friends be with this host who “shall go away into everlasting punishment”? “Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.” “What is man”, as we behold him in this horrible mirror? He is a lost and ruined soul, world without end.

“But the righteous shall go into life eternal.” “As is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly.” We have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.” “We shall be like Him (Christ) for we shall see Him as He is!” “The Lord Himself shall descend from Heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first; then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds; and so shall we ever be with the Lord.” Henceforth, a crown of life is lain up for all who love the second appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ. Oh! what a blessed privilege, to be a human being, endowed with speech, reason, and especially with volition—to be able to reason on the Divine Providence, and speak with our fel-

lows of the mercy and goodness of our kind Heavenly Father—and that we may, without any coercion, freely use our own volition—the crowning endowment of our nature—and thus place ourselves in the hands of the Almighty Savior, who is willing and able to save “to the uttermost all who *will come* unto Him.” Oh! sinful man, will you not return at ONCE to the mercy and favor of God, and become a *real* Christian—a *true* follower of the meek and lowly Savior? To be an heir of God, and joint heir of with our Lord Jesus Christ, and realize, and rejoice in the forgiveness of sins, by the witnessing influence of the Holy Spirit, which God gives unto all who sincerely repent, and return to His mercy and favor, in Christ Jesus, the Lord—is thrice blessed. A child of the Devil, covered with the pollutions of sin, taken from the kingdom of darkness, and translated into the kingdom of light—the kingdom of God’s dear Son. Oh! this is wonderful! A child of God! An heir of Heaven! This means more than mere humanity. “Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us; that we should be called the children of God.” The real Christian has the peculiar endowment of the Holy Spirit, working in

him both to will and to do of God's good pleasure. "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit."

As a Christian, "What is man" now? He is a child of God—an heir of Heaven, abiding in that "peace which passeth understanding."

"Oh! for such love let rocks and hills  
Their lasting silence break."

But in this life Christians, perhaps more than others, realize that "bonds and afflictions" abide with them. They are yet clothed with sinful mortality. They are "like sheep among wolves," or "pilgrims and stranger" in a foreign country; but by faith they say: "Our citizenship is in Heaven;" "where the wicked cease from troubling and the weary are forever at rest."

Christ shall come the second time, and receive the finally faithful unto himself. "And they shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels." At death this mortal shall put on immortality, and "death shall be swallowed up in victory." "It doth not yet appear what we shall be, but we shall be like Him (the glorified Jesus) for we shall see Him as He *is*"—not in the flesh as He *was*, for in that way, "henceforth know we Him no more" forever. But the faithful shall be "changed into

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the same image, from glory to glory"; for God hath predestinated such "to be conformed into the image of His son"; who shall change our vile body, that it shall be fashioned like unto His glorious body." Christ, "being the brightest of His (God's) glory, and the express image of His person," and we, being like Him, or in His image, shall have been therefore restored to the image of God. This is Paradise regained, and so "shall we ever be with the Lord." The glorified saint in Heaven shall evidently be like God, and present with Him, in a sense transcendently above that enjoyed by our Father Adam in the Garden of Eden. The Lord by His prophet said: "I will restore unto you double." Job, like man, was perfect and in the favor of God; he was in possession of much riches, but it was all wrested from him and he was left, for a time, to grope his way in darkness, not even his wife proved a true helpmate. But at length his eyes were opened and he said: "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that He shall stand in the latter days upon the earth—yet in my flesh shall I see God"—evidently referring, at least secondarily, to his own restoration to prosperity. So, after severe trial, his property was restored unto him double—exactly twice as much of each kind as he had before. But shall we conclude that

the inheritance of the glorified saints in the Heavenly Paradise is only double that enjoyed by our foreparents in the earthly Paradise? Surely, this is only a general expression and but dimly shadows forth the “far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory” which is promised by Him who “is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think.” “Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises, that by these ye might be *partakers* of the DIVINE NATURE, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.” “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which, according to His abundant mercy, hath begotten us again unto a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that fadeth not away, reserved in the Heaven for you.” But “eye hath not seen, ear hath not heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man the things that God hath in reservation for the finally faithful; but the spirit hath revealed them unto us.” “Now we see through a glass darkly, then face to face; now I know in part, but then shall I know even as also I am known.”

But if these exceeding grand and glorious promises are only faint foreshadowings of the

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glory and exaltation that shall follow our introduction in the Heavenly Caanan, who can even conjecture the divine bliss of the eternal possession and realization of the inheritance of the glorified saints in the Heavenly Jerusalem!!! Let us go! Oh! let us ALL go!! since *whosoever will* may *freely* partake of this grand inheritance of the saints in glory.

“There need not one remain behind  
For Christ hath bidden all mankind.”

Dear reader, even in this world you are crowned with the honor of human intelligence, and the Lord your God, who is pure and immutable, cannot be reconciled to you in your sinful state, but by the proper free exercise of the wonderful attributes of your nature, *you* may become reconciled to His favor and eventually be a partaker of the saints’ everlasting rest. Will you go? “Life and death is set before you.” “Choose ye *this day* whom ye will serve.” God so loved you individually, and the whole sinful human race collectively, that He disguised Himself in humanity, that *you* might not be afraid of Him, (“Our God is a consuming fire”) but freely and fearlessly *come* to Him in Christ and be restored to His image and favor. “God was, in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, (*not* Him-

*self reconciled to the world, as told in human creeds; for that implies a change in God, not in man)* not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us (the living ministry) the word of reconciliation." "We pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God." Oh! will ye reject this grace? You cannot be happy without this wonderful gift. Will you accept it? Then read the prophet's prayer in the ninth chapter of Daniel, and say: "Henceforth I shall be the Lord's servant." Then, if you are faithful to God and true to your trust in this world, you will eventually be rewarded with everlasting life and a crown of glory. Oh! who would not seek a home in the haven of eternal repose!! When sinful man shall have become glorified saints in Heaven, crowned with glory and in the full enjoyments of everlasting life, restored to the image of his Creator and dwelling in His immediate presence, and spending the eternal ages in ascribing praise and honor and glory and majesty and power unto God the Father, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever—who, then, can answer the question, "What is man," as we see him thus so highly exalted? Let Heaven answer; it is too high for earth.

David speaks of the heavens in contrast with the free creature, man. The celestial bodies,

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with all their grandeur and magnitude, have ever been obedient to the divine laws to which they were at first subjected. The material sun, the king of day, has never refused to send forth its life-giving rays of light and heat throughout its whole realm to all willing recipients of its bounty. The moon and the stars continue to shine by night and shed forth either their own or reflected light, and thus beautify the heavens, cheer the benighted traveler on earth, and exhibit the wisdom and glory of their Creator.

Notwithstanding man was the climax of terrestrial creation, yet he has proven himself least worthy of the trust confided in him. When we think of him in contrast with all the regularity and grandeur of the heavenly bodies, and then with the lower animals, which by instinct are so obedient to the laws of their nature, we can better appreciate the interrogatory exclamation of the psalmist, David: "What is man, that thou art mindful of him; or the son of man, that thou visiteth him?" He was evidently thinking of his own dark crimes in connection with the sinful fallen state of the whole human race. In view of these things, he seemed to be astonished that God would take any cognizance of such wilfully rebellious creatures. He was doubtless judging by himself; knowing that he would not spare

such rebellious subjects. But in this we behold the wondrous love and mercy of the Lord our God. Since He has borne with our sins and weaknesses, has been long suffering toward us, "has waited long, is waiting still," can any doubt His willingness to grant repentance of sins? No, no, surely with the unspeakable gift—His Son—He will freely give us all things that are good for us to have. "No good thing will He withhold from them that walk uprightly." "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." Then, we can here live the life of the righteous and get home to Heaven at last, where we can realize fullness of joy and pleasures forevermore.

And when our days and years are passed  
And we from time are gone,  
We'll find our long-lost friends at last  
And reap the harvest sown.

## **THE MEDIATION OF CHRIST**

"There is one God and one mediator between God and men—the *man* Christ Jesus."—1 Tim., 2-5.

The term mediator implies one who officiates between parties at variance, to reconcile the disagreement by obtaining their mutual consent and obligation to a stated covenant.

Moses was the mediator of the old covenant made and entered into at Mount Sinai. He was not a substitute for either party, but acted as agents for each; and the parties were mutually pledged to do certain things. The obvious design of this covenant was to remind the people of their sins (see Heb., 10-3) and thereby restrain them, and also to serve as their protector or guard till the mediator of the new covenant should make his appearance. A people was thus prepared to receive the promised Messiah. We are repeatedly told that the law and its ceremon-

nies cannot take away sins nor impart new life. This covenant was in force during life in this world, and it pertained to the purification of the flesh—it was a kind of temporary and preparatory arrangement “imposed on them until the time of reformation.” “It was added because of transgression” “to bring us unto Christ that we might be justified by faith.” (See Heb., 9–10, 13 and 14; also Gal., 3–19, 24.) Peace, prosperity and long life were promised to the obedient, but it could not impart new life to the dead. But Jesus came expressly to destroy the devil who had the power of death, and thus put an end to sin, that we might become partakers of an everlasting covenant in the world to come. The good things shadowed forth by the figures of the old covenant have been brought nigh by the mediation of our Lord Jesus Christ. Notwithstanding the peculiar privileges of the Jews, they, like all others, were compelled to base their hopes of future life and blessedness upon the promise made in God’s covenant with Abraham.

Having thus contrasted the old and the new covenants, we are better prepared to investigate and understand the mediatorial work of our Lord Jesus Christ; and having considered both the divine and the human attributes in the Essays

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on God and Man, and observed the transgression and fall of the latter, we can readily see the relation borne to each party, and the position occupied by the mediator of the new covenant.

In this investigation we should not forget that men have ever been endowed with volition, and that God is not only love and mercy, but infinitely just and immutable. God being unchangeable, could never leave nor forsake His creatures; but man, being in freedom, could and did sever himself from his Creator—his only dependence for a continuance of life and happiness. Take a fish out of the water—its natural element—and dying it soon dies. Immerse a bird in water, which is not its natural element, and it will soon die. Just so, man, by the exercise of his volition, took himself out of God's favor, or image—his natural element—and it is a natural consequence for him to die, like a branch severed from a tree. Now it is the work of the mediator to graft him in again and give him a new life without infringing either the divine or human attributes—the volition of men and the justice and immutability of God especially. (See Rom., 3-26.) God had said: "Thou shalt surely die." "Dust thou art and unto dust shalt thou return." If Christ had been accepted as a sacrificial substitute for man, the sinner

would have been released from the whole penalty of disobedience; for surely infinite justice could not see it fall upon both: but even then the immutability of God would have been destroyed, for He had said: "Thou shalt die," and if He had accepted an equivalent sacrifice, He would have proven Himself changeable. But men continue to suffer and die; and since God is infinitely just and immutable, as well as love and mercy, we may therefore conclude that the mediator of the new covenant put forth no effort, either to mitigate or remove the penalty of the original transgression, so far as this world is concerned. "God so loved the world," therefore, His mediation was not to appease the wrath of an angry Father, but He came into our world and suffered and died, "that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil." All this was done "that whosoever believeth," (still in freedom) and would lay hold of the hope set before him, might be resurrected to an everlasting life.

This is strikingly illustrated in the Book of Esther. The Jews were captives in a foreign land. The laws in that country could not be changed. A decree was made that upon a set day all the Jews should be put to death. Queen Esther became mediator, and at the risk of her

life, plead with the King to spare her people. The King was willing to grant her request, but he could not reverse the decree; but he could make another, which he did, and accordingly the Jews defended themselves, and, as it were, enjoyed a new life from the dead. If this is not the lesson to be learned here, it would certainly be difficult to discover the "profitable doctrine" in this book. Since God "wills not the death of any," had it been consistent with the divine and human attributes, He certainly would have arbitrarily pardoned sinful man, without the ignominious death of his innocent son. Omnipotence guided by omniscience cannot do unnecessary work, and love and mercy cannot permit a useless sacrifice; therefore we may reasonably conclude that the incarnation, suffering and death of our Lord Jesus Christ was absolutely necessary for the redemption of fallen man; and since this intelligent creature has ever been endowed with volition, none but penitent believers can be resurrected to everlasting life, notwithstanding the price paid for his redemption. Without speech, reason and volition, and especially the latter, man would have been a brute, but certainly not a human being; therefore his salvation without the consent of his will, is obviously an impossibility.

But the reader may inquire, "if Christ was not substituted as an equivalent sacrifice for the original transgression and the actual sins of all, why did he come and suffer at all?" To understand this, we must, in connection with what has been said, consider man's original position in the scale of creation, and observe his willful transgression and fall to a lower plane. We can then see his need of divine assistance, and what the mediator wrought for his deliverance. As already explained in the Essay on Man, this intelligent creature experienced life with both Heaven and earth. Now all life is from God, and so long as the creature remained pure and holy, he was conjoined with the Creator, and could momentarily receive a new supply. An engine must constantly receive a new supply of steam power from the boiler, for otherwise it will have no power to propel the machinery. The electric fluid passes on the wire from one office to another, but if the wire is cut the communication stops. So man by transgression became separated from the fountain head of life, and must die eternally, if this connection is not restored. But God, who changes not, had said: "Thou shalt die." and return to dust; so there was no chance of restoring this connection until the sentence of death shall have been execu-

ted. Sinful man ran from his Creator and was afraid of His presence; therefore God said He would raise them up a prophet like unto Moses, who would exhibit His love and mercy, rather than His omnipotence and immutability, that He might by him win them back to His favor. This was the man Jesus, the mediator of the new covenant, who was born into this world, and died out of it, that divinity and humanity might again be at-one-ment, and ever remain conjoined in the word to come. Jesus was born like other children, evidently because that was the natural order of getting into this world, and a supernatural appearance might have frightened the people, and thus the object of His visit would have been defeated. Had he been a descendant of Adam, He would have inherited the seed of death, and consequently He would have died like other men; but being the Son of God, and the child of the woman—not of man—he did not inherit death, and having done no sin, He could never have died naturally; hence the necessity of His death by violence, that He might enter into His glory. (See Luke,<sup>24–26.</sup> He was God disguised in humanity—at the<sup>“</sup>same time both God and man. He came to seek and to save fallen man, and therefore it<sup>“</sup> behooved Him to be made like unto His brethren—a<sup>“</sup>partaker of

flesh and blood—that he might die voluntarily, and thus get properly into the empire of death, without its sentence upon Him, that He might impart to all who would willingly come unto Him the power of a resurrection unto an endless life. He says: “No man taketh my life from me, but I lay it down of myself; I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again.” No son of Adam can say much.

Now, since life implies conscious presence and similar existence, and man by sin has become dissimilar from God, and being so, cannot be present with nor receive life from Him, therefore the Divine Being, because of His wonderful love for dying men, clothed Himself with humanity, which became a mediator (or medium) between Him and them, that being similar to them in this respect, they might, by this means, become conscious of His presence, and, being willing, thus become alive with Him again; and He entering the heart, will cast the man of sin out, and put His law of liberty in their mind. In this way a sinful man becomes a party to the new covenant, which was brought about and made possible by and through the mediation of our Lord Jesus Christ, the only Son of the Eternal God, and our Savior. The Bible does not authorize us to say, “God the Son,” nor, “the

Eternal Son of God." Neither should we say that God in Christ is reconciled to us, for that implies a change in God; but repeat it like it reads: "God was in Christ reconciling the *world unto himself*." These, and similar absurdities, have covered the plan of redemption with a dark, dense cloud.

The MAN Jesus is the *one* mediator. "Through this *man* is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins." "God in these last days has spoken unto us by His Son." Our Savior was born and lived in this world, that He might manifest the Creator to the creature, and that "the heavens might drop down from above, and the skies pour down righteousness." Having done all this, He suffered and died, that He might get out of this world, and properly into the prison-house of death, that being in a similar state with them, He might "preach to the spirits in prison," and arise from the dead and enter into His glory. "O, fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into His glory?" St. Paul informs us that these things were done that Jesus might be Lord of both the living and the dead. The man Jesus was the medium through whom, "in these last days," God manifested Himself and spake unto

the world, that men might be persuaded to forsake their sins, and return to Him in Christ, and enjoy peace and rest to their souls, under this new and everlasting covenant. We need not sing:

“Jesus paid it all—  
All the debt I owe,”

And continue in willful sin, hoping to get to Heaven at last; but we should believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and “*Cease to do evil, and learn to do well.*”

The atonement provided through the mediation of Jesus, and “by whom we have now received” it, should certainly not be understood in the sense of payment or satisfaction for sin, but in the sense of reconciliation or returning to God’s favor. (See Rom., 5, 10, 11; also 2 Cor., 5, 18–21.) It is a question of getting back to God, and from under the dominion of sin. He suffered and died because of our sins, which brought death, “that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the spirit.”

The Mosaic covenant pertained to the flesh, and the things of this world; but Christ Jesus has “condemned sin in the flesh”—that is, has confined its dominion to this world, under certain conditions—and has brought about a new

covenant, which pertains to the spirit, and eternal life in the world to come. “Are ye so foolish, having begun in the spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?” “There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit.” Jesus is able to save to the uttermost all who will come unto God by or through Him. But He is pure and holy, while sin has ever been our dwelling place; therefore we must, by true repentance, forsake our sinful home, and approach Him by faith, trusting in the promises of the new and everlasting covenant. Believing in Jesus, we also believe in the Father who sent Him; and thus believing, new life is imparted—for, “Whosoever believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins”—not because He suffered and died in our stead, to appease the wrath of an Almighty God, but because the sinner is greatly beloved, and the Father only waits to be willingly received into the heart, that He may enter, and cast the strong man of sin out, and destroy his dominion. “Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any man hear my voice and will open the door, I will come in and sup with him and he with Me.” The words and works of Jesus were recorded, that we might believe that He is the Christ, the Son of God; and that

lieving, we might have life through His name.

St. Paul informs us that Agar and Sarah—the concubine and wife of Abraham—with their descendants, allegorically represent these two covenants. Agar, the bond-maid, stands for Mount Sinai, the place where the old covenant was sealed; and also for the city of Jerusalem, the executive headquarters of the law. She and her multitudes of children, who are born after the flesh, are still in bondage. But Sarah represents the new covenant, and the Heavenly Jerusalem; and she being free, is the allegorical mother of all the children of God, by faith in Jesus Christ. (See Gal., 4, 21-3.)

As partakers of this heavenly calling, under the new covenant, we, like Isaac, are free, and the children of promise; therefore we should not act like children of the bond-woman. “The law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.” Therefore the partakers of these heavenly promises should reckon themselves dead indeed unto the world and its “rudiments,” but alive unto God through Christ; with whom they should remain buried into this death, and never arise therefrom but there “walk in the spirit,” “in the newness of life,” that they may “not fulfill the lusts of the flesh.” The Mosaic veil will then be

taken away, and the spirit of the Lord will bring them into the liberty of the new covenant; where they should "stand fast," and not become "entangled again with the yoke of bondage." Such persons "are not under the law, but under grace." (See Rom., 6, 14.) For, the law was not made for the righteous, "but for the lawless and disobedient."

While Mount Sinai thunders wrath, Mount Calvary cries peace and good will to the children of men. The old covenant had reference to "the law of sin and death;" but the new has reference to "the law of the spirit of life." The weakness of the law "through the flesh," under the old covenant, could not prevent suffering and death, the penalty of sin; but the might "of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus," under the new can raise the dead to life again. The old covenant, like fallen men, "is of the earth, earthly;" but the new, like its author, the Lord of Glory, is heavenly and eternal.

So it behooved our mediator "to be born of a woman," and be a partaker of human nature, that being in the likeness of sinful men, he could address their intelligence, through the media of sight and hearing, and thereby obtain the consent of their will to forsake sin, and accept the gift of eternal life in the world to come. Men

had become so sensual, that doubtless the heavenly lessons could not have been otherwise grasped by the human understanding. It became Him as mediator and captain of our salvation, to endure the hardships and sufferings of human life in this world, that he might convince sensual man that He was perfect, and therefore a merciful, faithful, and suitable High Priest to provide for their reconciliation to the favor of God. (See Heb., 2, 14, 17.) His human nature further behooved Him, "that He, by the *grace* of God, should taste death for every man"—that is, destroy Satan's power of death, and provide for the resurrection of all, (see Heb., 2-9, 14.) and by this means provide eternal redemption for those who are called and "receive the promise of the eternal inheritance." (See Heb., 9-15.) Having suffered all these things, Jesus, our mediator, arose from the dead, and ascended on high to the Tabernacle not made with hands, to appear in the presence of God as our Great High Priest. He was delivered *because of* our offences, and raised from the dead, *in order to* our justification to life. (See Rom., 4-26.) Wherefore God has exalted Him above all principality, power, and dominion, and has given Him a name superior to any other, and decreed that every knee, both in Heaven and earth, shall bow to

Him, and that every tongue shall confess Him Lord,. (Jehovah), “ to the glory of God the Father.”

“ All hail the power of Jesus’ name !  
Let an<sub>g</sub>els prostrate fall ;  
Bring forth the royal diadem,  
And crown Him LORD OF ALL.”

## S A L V A T I O N .

There are no fewer than five kinds of Salvations spoken of in the Bible. Temporal Salvation has frequently been wrought by the Lord for peculiar individuals and nations. David was delivered from death several times by the especial care of Providence. The Lord delivered Goliath into his power and so his own life was spared. The lions were not permitted to hurt Daniel, nor the fire to scorch the Hebrew children. Both Elijah and Elisha were divinely protected. The twelve apostles were released from prison by an angel, and Peter alone made a similar escape, while Paul and Silas, at the hour of midnight, received an angelic visit, and their chains fell off and they were soon released.

God has frequently wrought especial deliverance for armies and nations, as well as individuals. "The Most High ruleth in the kingdoms of men and giveth it to whomsoever He will." "He doeth according to His will in the army of

Heaven.” The Lord was the constant protector of the Israelites. He delivered them from Egyptian bondage. The Lord sent His angel to destroy the Assyrian army, who were besieging Jerusalem, when good Hezekiah was king, and so he and his people were delivered out of their power.

Since God is the same, “yesterday, to-day and forever,” we may be sure that His especial blessings will ever be bestowed upon the pious and faithful. The doctrines of especial Providences should cheer every “way-worn traveler.”

But there is another Salvation spoken of, which is general in its application. Man, by transgression, fell from the holy estate in which he was created; and God has wrought a wonderful deliverance for them in the scheme of Salvation. While it is said “Thou shalt die,” it is not written that he shall never be made alive again; therefore his deliverance from the bondage of sin and death is possible. Man must suffer and die, but he may be brought to life again. “God so loved the world” that He has provided a way for man’s redemption “by the offering up of His Son, once for all.” Sin carries all men into the regions of death, but through the mediation of Jesus, all shall be made alive. Justice and immutability demand the former—love and mercy

have called forth the latter. Prophets became students of their own writings concerning this great Salvation and the angels attempted to pry into its mysteries; but it was reserved for the gospel dispensation to unfold this wondrous plan. St. Paul, in speaking of the Salvation of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ, says: "By grace are ye saved"—that is, God, of His own free will and mercy, without consulting human agency or asking man's co-operation in any respect whatsoever, did provide this redemption for fallen men, and therefore the resurrection of all is a certainty, and eternal happiness is within the reach of human agency. This whole plan was evidently devised before Adam was created; therefore it was impossible for man either to merit or ask for this great blessing. Then it was wholly of God's mercy and therefore by grace. Anything gratuitously bestowed is of grace, but if it is asked for, bought or merited in any way it is certainly not of grace. Therefore this is the only Salvation spoken of in the Bible that can be properly by grace. "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God, (all) being justified *freely* by His grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." So God's righteousness by faith in Jesus Christ is manifested to all men. (See Rom., 3-23, 24). His

grace that doth bring Salvation to all hath in these last days appeared. (See Titus, 2-11.) The earth with all its furniture and decorations were prepared for the service and glory of man before he was created, and of course he could not have merited them, asked for them nor even desired them; therefore it was by grace that he inherited all these things. As our spiritual eternal well-being was similarly provided for in the atonement made by our Lord Jesus Christ for the reconciliation of fallen men, we may therefore conclude that the justification or Salvation which is by grace invariably has reference to this and nothing more. By reference to those texts in Scriptures where the adjunct "by grace" is used, no one need be in doubt on this subject; and therefore it is hoped that the sectarian logomachy about being saved by grace will some day cease.

So we see that the grace of God has provided a resurrection for all and that a new, happy, eternal life is brought within the reach of human agency. "He will have mercy on whom He will have mercy"; but we are plainly told repeatedly that He wills to have mercy upon *whoever will* repent and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. Grace has provided Salvation for all, but we shall soon see that the attaining to

this grace—the pardon of sins, conversion or justification—is suspended on the condition of faith in God through Christ, preceded by true repentance. Human agency being consulted, and man's co-operation thus required, this Salvation is not by grace, but as we hope to show plainly to be by faith.

We may reasonably conclude that the churches written to by St. Paul were composed of both Jewish and Gentile converts, and from the arguments advanced by the apostle it seems evident that there were contentions between them. The Jews, who had hitherto been the peculiar people of God, were evidently unwilling for the Gentiles to remain in the church with them. They seemed to think that they had an exclusive right to all of God's blessings. But in the Epistle to the Romans they are reminded that by breaking the law they had even forfeited their right to all its blessings—and further, that the Gospel was not by the law, but by grace. "It is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy." As if he had said: "You Jews need not be making a great ado about how and upon whom the blessings of the Gospel shall be bestowed. You may will and strive in vain to have it your way, but the Gospel shall be given to all man-

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kind according to the will of God, in fulfillment of the promise made to Abraham"—“In thy seed shall ALL the NATIONS of the earth be blessed.” Having established the fact that the Gospel was not by the law but by grace, the apostle proceeds to show that the benefits of this grace could only be reached by faith. He says: “Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law”, and consequently the Gentile has as much right to claim the pardon of sins and membership in the Christian church as the boasting Jew. Neither of them has any righteousness of his own, and alike they are dependent upon the righteousness of God, which is by faith in Jesus Christ. Each must heartily and sorrowfully repent of all his actual sins, regret his fallen condition and return to God by faith—and as Christ is the ONLY WAY it must be through Him.

In the fourth chapter of Romans the apostle argues justification by faith as a natural and necessary sequence of Salvation by grace. He says: “Therefore it is of faith that it might be by grace, to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed.” This promise was made to Abraham and all who should become his children by faith and accept the promises and be obedient to God’s commandments, as he was. (See Gal., 3-7.)

In the fifth chapter the apostle proceeds to draw his conclusions from the premises already laid down: "Therefore being justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." We leave our sinful dwelling place by true repentance and return to God by faith in Christ and enjoy the peace of reconciliation. Surely the apostle here teaches that the pardon of sin is offered on the condition of faith. (See also Gal., 2-16.) The same apostle elsewhere says: "Through this man—Jesus—is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins, and by Him all that *believe* are justified", etc. (Acts, 13-38, 39.) He "pursuaded them to *continue* in the grace of God." (43d verse.) This was at Antioch, in Pisidia—not the Antioch where the disciples were first called Christians. This was evidently St. Paul's first visit there; and as these people had never heard the Gospel before, surely the preacher would tell them exactly how to get rid of their sins—but not a word about baptism nor going to a human priest—but simply "through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sin, and by him all that *believe* are justified." They certainly accepted the Gospel as offered, or they would not have been "pursuaded to *continue* in the grace of God."

St. Peter, being sent by an angel to Cornelius

and his household to tell them how to be saved, said : “To Him (Christ) give all the prophets witness that through His name WHOEVER BELIEVETH IN HIM SHALL RECEIVE REMISSION OF SINS.” God put no difference between the Jews and Gentiles, “purifying their hearts by faith.” (See Acts, 10-43 and 15-9.) The jailor said to Paul and Silas: “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” They answered him, saying: “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved.”

It is quite evident that, not only the pardon of sins, but every individual blessing is suspended on the condition of faith. The leper said to Jesus: “If Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean.” Jesus replied: “I will, (it) be thou clean.” Jesus touched the eyes of two blind men, saying: “According to your faith be it unto you,” and immediately their eyes were opened. A certain woman said: “If I may but touch the hem of His garment, I shall be whole.” She touched it, and was immediately cured; but when Jesus found her out, he said to her: “Thy *faith* hath made thee whole.” Surely the only condition was faith in the man in whom the God-head dwelt. Oh! that every one would repent of his sins, and believe the truth as it is in Jesus! Reader, are you ashamed of your sin-

ful life? Do you heartily and sorrowfully repent of every sin you have ever committed? Would you be set free? "Wilt thou be made whole"? Do you believe—that is, are you quite sure—that "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself?" Will you accept Him as your God and Jesus as your Savior? Are you determined by the grace of God to "cease to do evil and learn to do well?" Then you have a right to claim justification from sin, and the peace of reconciliation with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

In Romans (8-24) St. Paul says: "We are saved by hope." Now, from what has already been said, it is quite evident that the Salvation here spoken of can neither have reference to the atonement nor justification from sin—the former we have found to be by grace and the latter by faith—but this is declared to be by hope. By examining the context we shall find that the apostle is here speaking of the glorification of the body. Hope implies both desire and expectation, and as Christians we both desire and expect our vile bodies to be changed and fashioned like unto the glorified body of our Lord. In this life bonds and affliction, disease and death, is the common lot of all; but the Christian joyfully anticipates the day when death

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shall be swallowed up of life and these mortal bodies shall have put on immortality. St. Paul says: "If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable." But we believe that Christ has risen from the dead, and though our vile bodies perish, yet we *desire* and *expect* glorified bodies like our Lord's; and it is this hope that sustains and *saves* us from despair during the trials and sufferings of this life. The Christian is a pilgrim and a stranger, having no inheritance in this world save the promises and blessed anticipation of a glorious citizenship in Heaven. Every one may spiritually adopt the language of the poet:

"Nothing on earth I call my own  
A stranger to the world unknown ;  
I all their goods despise.  
I trample on their whole delight,  
And seek a city out of sight,  
A city in the skies."

The apostle suggests that the sufferings of this world are unworthy of being compared with our glorious citizenship in Heaven, since the body—"the creature"—will then be delivered from the bondage of corruption and be elevated to the glorious liberty of the children of God. Oh! blessed hope! thou that cheereth and keepeth us safe, while traveling here below—how could we live without thee! Oh! thou spirit of

the living God, that inspireth us with hope of a blessed immortality! reign thou in our hearts and keep us from the power of adversity that we may stand fast to the end of life.

But the eternal Salvation of both soul and body in the world to come, which was provided by grace, and is attained to by faith and clung to by hope, is the greatest of all. It is the end and object of all our hope, faith and Christian perseverance. If there be no reward in the next world, then Christianity is a delusion, a cheat and a failure, and all the sacrifices made by its devotees are in vain.

But we are persuaded that a better day is coming; therefore we both labor and suffer reproach that we may be thought worthy of a resurrection unto everlasting life. The Philippians had heard of the Salvation by grace and had evidently attained to it by faith when they were exhorted to work out their Salvation; wherefore we may be very sure that this Salvation is not only different from those, but that it was still in the future and the grand object of all the rest. Their sins had certainly been pardoned, and they were then in the full enjoyment of the peace of reconciliation with God. There were no charges against them, for the apostle says: "As ye have always obeyed, not as in my pres-

ence only, but now much more in my absence, *work out your own Salvation* with fear and trembling, for it is God which worketh in you, both to will and to do of His good pleasure." (See Phil., 2-12, 13.) The exhortation to work seems to imply that it was essential to their continuance in the grace of God. Only those who hold the beginning of their confidence and the rejoicing of hope steadfast unto the end shall be made partakers of Christ, in the tabernacle not made with hands. (See Heb., 3-6, 14.) How shall we escape if we neglect so great Salvation; plainly implies that there is great danger; therefore let us watch and be sober. Let us not sleep to our eternal interest, but constantly work in the Lord's vineyard as best we can, trusting the guidance of the Spirit working in us both to will and to do of His good pleasure. So we see human agency is still respected and the Christian's eternal Salvation is suspended on the condition of continued faithfulness till death, exhibited by works of obedience. In this way, Abraham was justified by works when he offered his son, Isaac—that is, by this act of obedience he proved himself still just and true to the service of God. He had been justified by faith long before, and it was imputed to him for righteousness. He certainly had the power to

refuse this obedience, but had he done so he would no longer have been the father of the faithful. Rahab, the harlot, was justified by works—that is, she proved herself true to the messengers of Israel, and therefore her life was spared. Unquestionably, her justification has no reference to the pardon of her sins nor to her safe arrival in Heaven at last. Christians are exhorted to work, watch, pray and labor to enter into their final rest, being assured that all who sin wilfully and thus depart from the living God will be rejected, cursed and burned like the thorns and briars. (See Heb., 6-7, 8; 10-26.) A state of “fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation” will ensue, and it seems that the punishment due those who do “despite to the spirit of grace” cannot be estimated.—Heb., 10-27, 28. The Christian who falls in love with himself, or this sinful world, subjects himself to this punishment. (See 2 Tim., 4-10 and also 1 John 2-15, 16.) These who receive the Gospel into a heart already surcharged with cares, riches and pleasures of this life, can bring forth no fruit to perfection and reap life everlasting unless these things are cast out and constantly avoided. Christians shall be sorely afflicted and tried in this world, and many shall become offended and betray and hate one another and

iniquity shall abound and the love of many wax cold, "but he that *shall endure to the end* the same shall be saved." (Matt., 24-8, 13.) This Scripture is certainly most fearfully fulfilled in our day. Doubtless the mixing up of the different kinds of Salvation spoken of in the Bible, and sectarian logomachy, (wrangling arguments—war in Heaven—) is one grand cause of the sad decline, witnessed and deplored in the church of our day.

The angels which sinned and kept not their first estate have been cast down to hell, and reserved in chains of darkness unto the judgment of the great day; then will any dare think or argue that human agency ceases when a person becomes a Christian, and that there is no danger of falling away and losing the eternal inheritance at last? Adam was certainly in a safer condition than we are now, yet he sinned and fell from his state of holiness. King Saul was once endowed with the spirit of prophecy, but he sinned and became disobedient and down he went. The *boy* Solomon would "work *with* God," and was happy in the partnership; but the *man* Solomon became disobedient, and would work *without* God, therefore he was discontented and wretched. Ezekiel informs us that when a righteous man turns from his righteousness

and commits iniquity, he shall die. (3-20.) The Jews were broken off from the good olive tree, because of their unbelieving disobedience, and we are plainly taught in many texts of Scripture that the Christian stands upon his continued faithful obedience. Hence the Savior says: "Abide in Me"; "So shall ye bear much fruit"; "If My word abide in you", which plainly implies, not only that the disciple has the power by willing disobedience to take himself out of Christ, but also that there is danger of his so doing. If every one coming to Christ is unconditionally kept, surely the exhortation to abide in Him is unnecessary. Therefore let every one take heed lest he fall from his steadfastness, and thus become separated from God in Christ and wither and die, like a branch separated from its parent vine. Labor, watch, pray and persevere to the end of life, that communion with God through Christ may be kept up and spiritual strength daily renewed from the fountain-head. This can be done by studying the Word of God, by private devotion and public worship; by manifesting love and sympathy to the poor and wretched and especially to the household of faith, by shunning all known evil and going about doing good and by child-like simplicity and perpetual obedience, *thus*, work out your

eternal salvation "with fear and trembling"—not in your own strength, nor in the sense of merit; for when we have done all we can we are still "unprofitable servants," but in this great work "we are laborers together with God"; for, while we thus work, God's Holy Spirit works in us "both to will and to do of His good pleasure." We are divinely assured that such work and labor of love is not forgotten by our Heavenly Father and it is certainly of great importance, since we are exhorted "to abound always in the work of the Lord."

"Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." Is not a sinner free and at liberty to sow to the flesh or to the spirit as he pleases? When he becomes a Christian is he not still free? and if he does not abound in the work of the Lord is there not danger of his being enticed by the devil to spend his spare time from the Lord's work in sowing to the flesh? and since "a little leaven leavens the whole lump," is there not a fearfully great probability that he will soon discontinue the Lord's work and busy himself wholly with the flesh and the affairs of this world and finally reap an abundant harvest of corruption, darkness and death? Have we not the best of reasons for fearing that thousands are annually waxing cold and falling into this device of the devil? Many

warning voices have been raised at this point, but nevertheless the heedless Christian soldier still falls a victim to this snare of the adversary. The devil readily employs every idler in the Lord's vineyard; and he is represented as going about seeking such, that he may finally devour them. Hence it appears that every Christian who ceases to abound in the work of the Lord moves his membership to Ephesus, and the Lord has at least one charge against him—he has left his first love, has fallen, and must repent and do his first work or his light will be removed and darkness and death will of course be the result. If he *will not* repent, and *thus* retain his candle-stick, you may expect soon to find him a member in bad standing of the church at Laodicia. Then, being neither cold nor hot, the Lord will spew him out of his mouth. Do not follow the example of Esau and sell your eternal birth-right for fleshy gratifications nor worldly pleasure; but mortify the flesh and subdue all worldly desires, that the love of the Father may dwell in you and keep you from passing away with the world. (See 1 John, 2-15, 17.)

St. Paul found it necessary for him to work, preach and keep a constant watch over himself, lest he should finally be a castaway. If all this was necessary to make his peace, calling and

election sure—that he might be thought worthy of eternal life—how shall we escape if we *neglect* to *work* out our eternal Salvation with fear and trembling? The Christian soldier should have on the whole panoply of God and faithfully fight the Lord's battles, contending with principalities and powers in high places.

Love to God and our fellows must be embodied in life, for Christianity is not a creed to be subscribed to, but a life to be lived—a life of self-denial and obedience. We, like our faithful Father Abraham, are justified by works, when we prove our obedience by ceasing to do evil and learning to do well—by keeping every known commandment and trusting the Spirit working in us to open our understanding of the Scriptures, that other duties may be revealed. We can prove our love to our fellows by kind words and charitable deeds, remembering that it is not by our baptism nor church creed that we are to be known as disciples of Jesus, but by our love to one another. “Love is the fulfilling of the law.” Knowing this, it is high time to awake out of sleep, since “our Salvation is nearer than when we first believed”; therefore let us quit the works of darkness and engage in the works of light and liberty. (See Rom., 13-10, 12.) Since so many witnesses have testified to

God's faithfulness, let us lay aside every weighty besetting sin, let us be wonderfully in earnest, and by prayers and supplication, working and waiting, run the Christian race with much patience and long-suffering, that we may be thought worthy of that eternal life promised to the faithful. These things are evidently necessary (see 1 Peter, 1-7, 9) for the trial of our faith, which is more precious than gold tried in the fire, that we may be prepared for the praise, honor and glory of Jesus at His appearing; from whom we shall then receive the end of our faith, even the Eternal Salvation of our souls and enter into that "joy unspeakable and full of glory."

From all that has been said, we conclude:

First—That Salvation is of this world. God has, in all ages, rescued His chosen and devout servants from their enemies and death.

Second—The Salvation which is by grace has reference only to the atonement made by our Lord Jesus Christ because of the sin of the world, and in order to the resurrection unto life.

Third—That Salvation from the dominion of sin—or justification—is suspended on the condition of faith in God through Christ, preceded by repentance.

Fourth—That the Salvation which is by hope

refers to the redemption of our bodies from corruption.

\* Fifth—That the Salvation which is to be worked out has direct reference to the deliverance from sin and its consequences, and all that is worldly, and being saved eternally in Heaven.

“And won’t that be joyful”?

## SERMON.

"For the bed is shorter than that a man can stretch himself on it; and the covering narrower than that he can wrap himself in it."—Isaiah, 28-20.

This entire chapter is highly figurative. The whole nation of Israel was in a back-slidden state. They were mentally drunk or infatuated with error, idolatry and wickedness—"they err in vision and they stumble in judgment." The Lord had taught them, and then taught them again the same lesson; but still they must be nourished with the food of infants, for none of them was prepared to learn knowledge nor understand doctrine. Many of them had doubtless become skeptical, not knowing nor caring much about God, nor the appearance of the promised Messiah. Their covenant with death and hell being a failure, the Lord promised a sure foundation for their faith that would insure them rest and peace in the hour of death. The language of the text was uttered as a kind of reason why they needed a foundation to build upon for eter-

nity. The text should not be understood literally, for surely no man is so foolish as to make a bed shorter than his body, nor any woman who would make covering only half as wide as the bed; in worldly matters people are too wise for such mistakes to occur. If the text is to be understood figuratively, the bed and covering must represent something in spiritual life or religion.

Now, a bed is made to rest on during the night, and the covering to keep the body comfortable. In many places in the Bible we find night used as a representative of death. That we may be daily reminded of our emigration to the spiritual world is probably why our bodies require sleep. Our Creator certainly meant to teach us something by this necessity of our bodies. As we lie down to sleep and rest during the night, so we must some day lie down in death, to awake in the great day of eternity. Now, as night represents death, the bed and covering must refer to that upon which we rely for rest and comfort in the hour of death. This, unquestionably, is one's faith or religion, whether it be pure or impure, or whether it emanate from true piety or infidelity. The Lord intimates that no bed will be long enough for ease nor sure enough as a foundation upon which to

build hopes of dying peace and future bliss, except the Lord Jesus Christ, the elect, precious, well tried corner stone. The covering evidently represents the life with which one's faith is clothed, or by which it is exhibited to others. The Lord further intimates that no wicked nor self-righteous life will be able to cover the soul comfortably nor screen it from infinite justice in the hour of death and the day of eternal retribution.

This is certainly a very strong and impressive figure and should make a lasting and profitable impression upon the minds of all who read and understand it. The Jews were very young children in spiritual knowledge and doctrine, and hence these heavenly truths were veiled in figures and symbols, that they might at least catch a glimpse of the realties of the future. For eternal things had not then been brought to light, as we now see them in the Gospel mirror.

In this text we are taught that "Jesus Christ is the only hope for a lost and ruined world"—that true faith in Him is the only bed that is long enough, short enough, wide enough, high enough and suitable in every respect to afford peace and rest when we come to die; and further, we are here informed that His righteousness is the only certain dependence for com-

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fort and happiness at death and in eternity.

Universalists may rely upon the faith and hope that all will eventually be unconditionally saved; but their bed is evidently too short, since it does not reach all the way from human volition to Christ; and since their faith is not a great incentive to a life of piety, it is evident that their life as a covering will be too thin as well as too narrow for them when the night of death approaches. Many rely upon external religion and formal worship. Some depend upon their baptism or belonging to a certain sectarian church. Others rely upon common honesty and worldly charity, and some upon being individually elected and called from all eternity. Some feel sure of a long life, and relying wholly upon the mercy of God at last, they "sow wild oats," and indulge freely in all kinds of sinful pleasures. Some believe in God, but reject the Lord Jesus and divine revelation, saying: "My Creator brought me into this world without my consent and will carry me out at His own pleasure," and so they contend that the greatest good is to make the best of this life. They, with many of other classes, say: "Let us both by words and actions, eat and drink, for to-morrow we die." Some would persuade themselves and others that there is no God, no Heaven, no hell,

no hereafter—nothing to do but to gratify the passions and appetites of self in this life. But very few, if any, of this class have ever lain down contentedly upon this bed “to sleep the sleep of death.”

But if this little preacher understands the twenty-eighth chapter of Isaiah, and especially the text under consideration, then surely all the classes above mentioned are making short beds and narrow covering for death and eternity. For just as sure as there is a God, a Heaven and a hell, and the Bible is a divine revelation, so surely no person can safely rely for comfort, peace and happiness in this world, at death or in eternity, save by trusting in the Lord Jesus Christ and being clothed with His righteousness; and this faith and righteousness can only be exhibited, proven and made sure by a hearty repentance, a life of piety and faithfulness until death.

“Repent, for the kingdom of Heaven is at hand.” “Except ye repent ye shall all likewise perish.” “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved.” “Whosoever believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins.” “I will give unto every one of you according to your works.” “Be thou faithful unto death and I will give thee a crown of life.” “These (the wicked) shall go away into everlasting punishment; but the righteous into life eternal.”

WHERE WILL YOU SPEND ETERNITY?

## SERMON.

### THE SUM OF THE GOSPEL.

"This is the work of God, that ye believe on Him whom He hath sent."—John, 6-29.

Of the the way of holiness, it is written: "The wayfaring men, though fools, *shall* not err therein." However, on the minor points of theology and religion there is a great diversity of opinion. To love God supremely and the neighbor as one's self is the fulfillment of the whole law. But it appears that our text is the sum of the Gospel of Christ. He who properly loves God and his neighbor observes at least the spirit of the whole law; even so, he who properly believes in the Lord Jesus grasps at once all of theology and all of religion. Here we see the plain, positive and imperative duty of every individual; and he who reads may understand. It is true that there are many things in the Bible which are hard to be understood, but the most simple need not mistake the true meaning of this text.

Perhaps a more important question never was asked than the one propounded in the verse preceding our text, and it could not have been asked a more appropriate person than the world's Redeemer. Jesus had, the previous day, preached to a large multitude of people by the seaside, and He had miraculously fed the whole multitude with five loaves of bread and two small fishes. At the request of Jesus the disciples took ship to cross over the sea, but Jesus repaired to a mountain to pray. During the night He went to them, walking on the water, and they all landed together. Next day some of the people who had satisfied their appetites at our Lord's miraculous feast came over seeking for Jesus. But He gave them to understand that He knew they cared nothing for His miracles and divine mission, but only wanted to satiate their appetites with perishable food. He intimated that His instruction was Heavenly food and would prepare their souls for life everlasting. No doubt many in our day are making a similar mistake, only now they are seeking for intellectual feasts. Thousands are going to church just to hear preaching, not to worship, and, like these Jews, they persuade themselves that they are doing the work of God. Wealthy congregations pay large sums for intellectual preachers,

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that they may have a feast all the year round. If they do this only for intellectual gratification, they certainly are not worshipping God nor doing His work, for “God is a spirit and seeketh” spiritual and true worshippers.

These Jews, feeling the Lord’s rebuke and desiring to feign themselves sincere seekers after the truth, said to Jesus: “What shall we do that we might work the works of God?” As if they had said: “We have left our secular affairs and come here to see your miracles and hear your instruction; and if we are not right in this, how *can* we do the work of God?” Jesus knew all this was fleshly, external and formal, but He would get into their hearts that He might do them real and lasting good; he would have them to believe on Him, forsake all and become His true disciples, that they might have life everlasting. However, He did not answer their question and tell them *how* they could do God’s work, but He addressed them as adult freemen—not as servants nor brutes—and told them in the language of the text what the work of God is, and left them do this work freely, or not do it, as they pleased. “This is the work of God, that ye believe on Him whom He hath sent.” God wills that every one who sees the Son and believes on Him shall have everlasting life; for I

has promised to raise such and bring them into this rich and glorious inheritance at the last day. Then this faith in Christ implies and comprehends every Christian duty from repentance to glorification. Theology and religion as thus expressed is both laconic and simple, but at the same time it is comprehensive and unfathomable. Wayfaring men may in simplicity accept Christ and rejoice in the peace of reconciliation with God; but men noted for learning and piety may spend a long life studying this "little Bible" and continually find new beauties and more excellent knowledge.

A person may feel very sure that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, but if the heart (or will) is not put into this faith, it will remain lifeless and he will continue in love with sin, the world and himself, and will not repent of his sins and return to God. Another may not understand what is meant by the declaration that Jesus is the Son of God, yet if he accept this testimony to the best of his understanding, wills to do right, is anxious to get to Heaven and will repent of his sins, he may enter into the joy of faith, even though his knowledge of theology and his religious experience may never be expressed more elegantly than the poor huckster's :

- "I am a poor sinner and nothing at all,  
But Jesus Christ is my all in all."

But intellectual faith will not enable us "to work the work of God," but when it is quickened into life by a broken heart—a submissive, obedient will, and the whole being is filled with anxiety, sincerity and truth—then this religious credulity, or faith, enables the individual to enter through the veil of Christ's humanity into the "Holy of Holies," "by this new and living way." "Faith comes by hearing," but throughout Christendom Christ is heard of through the Bible and the living ministry. Men hear and hear again; they weigh His instructive words and duly consider His miracles, and become *convinced* that Jesus is the Christ. They observe the influence that Christ exerts over individuals and nations and are *assured* that Jesus is the Savior of the world; but right here thousands stop—they will not *trust* in this Almighty Savior and thus complete or perfect their faith in Him; they will not repent and become an obedient disciple of His, and thus exhibit and prove in real life the whole trinity of their faith. Jesus says to such persons: "Ye *will not come* to me that ye might have life." "Ye *will not come* to the light because your deeds are evil."

Sinful men have become so carnal and sensual that they are incapable of spiritual thought, faith or worship. For God is a spirit of ubiquity,

omnipotent and immutable, and as such, unveiled, he is a consuming fire, and sinners are afraid of Him, and instead of coming back to Him they use their agency in trying to escape His presence, as they did at Mount Sinai when the law was given. But He veiled Himself in the humanity of Jesus, and thus "God was manifest (exhibited or shown to carnal men through the medium of their own corporeal senses, sight and hearing) in the flesh," that being thus clothed He might exhibit His love and mercy, destroy all slavish fear and encourage the sinner to return to His favor "through the veil"—that is to say His flesh—the humanity of Jesus. (See 1 Tim., 3-16, also Heb., 10-20.) "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them." (2 Cor., 5-19.) God, being a spirit and omnipresent, the finite minds of human beings, clothed with carnality, cannot grasp the Divine Being nor approach Him by faith; therefore He is, as it were, located, centralized and exhibited in the man Jesus, that every anxious candidate for Heavenly honor might know where to center his faith and how properly to direct all his energies. "This is the Lord's doing; it is marvelous in our eyes." This is the "tried corner stone," which is "precious" to the true believer, but a stumbling stone and

rock of offense to all “who stumble at the Word, being disobedient.” Deliverance from sin, and salvation from the pollutions of this world cannot be obtained elsewhere. “For there is none other name under Heaven given among men, whereby we **MUST** be saved.”

The jailor was promised Salvation on the condition of faith in the Lord Jesus; and Peter said to Cornelius and his household: “Whosoever believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins.” Our text assures us that faith in Jesus is *the work of God*; but notwithstanding its combined simplicity and depth of meaning and also the plain declarations above quoted, yet doubtless the Scripture—“many are called, but few are chosen”—is fearfully fulfilled in our own day. For there are thousands who profess to believe in Christ and do not even claim that their sins are pardoned or that they are trying to do the work of God. But the Scriptures being true they must be mistaken. They certainly do not properly believe on Jesus, the Son of God, or they would have “received remission of sins” and be doing the work of God. They may have two-thirds of faith in Him—*conviction* and *assurance*—but certainly they have not *trust*, the last but most essential part of faith. What! Believe on the Lord Jesus and remain an impeni-

tent sinner! Believe in hell and Heaven and not try to shun the former and reach the latter! What! Cheat, lie, defraud, gamble, commit adultery, murder, eat to gluttony, drink to drunkenness, desecrate the sacred Sabbath, profane the holy name of God, scoff at His providences, neglect studying His Holy Word, treat His worship with silent contempt, and then say you believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, in the Bible, in hell, in Heaven!!! No! no!—a thousand times no!—for then, why are your sins not pardoned? Why are you not doing the work of God? There must be something wrong. Let everyone examine himself and ascertain whether or not he is in the faith; and then endeavor by God's assistance to lead a new life and exhibit and prove his faith by works of obedience, avoiding sin and doing good, and thus prove his faith by his works, as Abraham did when he offered his son Isaac. "As ye receive Christ, so walk ye in Him." If you began the work of God by believing on Jesus, then continue and complete it in the same way. Jesus has taught us that we are continually as dependent upon Him as a branch is upon its parent vine. This relation can only be sustained by shunning evil and cleaving unto the Lord by faith. Christians should by their every word and act and by their

whole life say, like Peter: "We believe *pure art sure* that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God."

Jesus said unto the blind men: "According to your faith, so be it unto you." From all of these texts, together with what we know of ourselves and others, we are forced to conclude that very few have complete, perfect faith in the continued presence, goodness and power of our Lord Jesus Christ. For it appears that God's grace is bestowed upon individuals according to their faith and that each one's peculiar gifts are to be used "according to the proportion of faith"; but where is the Christian who has faith enough to command a sufficiency of grace to enable him to live and walk continually in the Spirit and never fulfill any of the lusts of the flesh? Oh! we of little faith! why do we doubt and live so far below our privilege? "Ye ask and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts." Here, perhaps, is the secret trouble. We do not trust in the Lord to keep us, saying, "Thy will be done," but we believe very much in the gratification of the lusts of the flesh and all our worldly desires. He that forsakes his sins and continually believes in the Lord is called to be a saint and an heir of glory, and the promise insures us that all

things shall work together for his good. What has the devout Christian to fear? Being convinced and assured that Jesus is the Christ, let him honestly and sincerely forsake all sin and devoutly *trust* in the Lord and always abound in His work.

This is the alpha and omega—the sum and substance—of all Christian theology, law and religion. It is the grand center, around which every other commandment clusters, from which obedience to them emanates, and to which each of them refers. Its simplicity is astonishing, but its fullness of meaning is beyond the grasp of the human understanding. Do not wait to ascertain which sect is exactly right nor what is the true mode of baptism—no need of procrastination—for whosoever will may *know* and *do* the “will” and “work” of God, and this work is to be done “in sincerity and truth,” and “according to the proportion of faith.” (See 1 Cor., 5-8, also Rom., 12-6. Therefore there is now no need of waiting to understand all the Scriptures, for in this “Little Bible” we have it all—**THIS IS THE WORK OF GOD, THAT YE BELIEVE ON HIM WHOM HE HATH SENT.**

There is, therefore, now no condemnation to those who thus do the work of God—that is, believe on Jesus and love one another, as we

are commanded—whosoever rejects the lusts of the flesh and honestly and sincerely lives continually in the Spirit and ever does those things that are pleasing in the Lord's sight. But God, who knows the secret thoughts and intents of the heart, causes them to feel condemned when they fall into sin that they may repent before the light of faith and zeal of love are extinguished. Every one should speedily by faith go to Jesus with every condemning burden and leave them all with Him, for He has promised to give rest to the soul. The Lord has promised that no good thing shall be withheld from those who do not live under the condemnation of sin. Therefore let every one who desires to do the work of God be very sure that all evil is purged out of his heart and the dominion of sin destroyed by the presence and power of the Holy Spirit, that he may by faith profitably partake of Christ, our passover, who has been sacrificed for us. "Therefore let us keep the feast," (or live the Christian life) not by the old sinful indulgences of "malice and wickedness," but by the unadulterated words and acts of "sincerity and truth" (See 1 Cor., 5-7, 8.) Unless the little preacher is greatly mistaken, this is most certainly the proper prescription for nearly every professed Christian of the present day. Lord Jesus, save the church from formality and worldliness.

## SERMON.

### THE COMPROMISE.

Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavily laden, and I will give you rest.—Matt. 11-28.

Rest can only be realized and appreciated by the weary. First labor, then rest.

The farmer plods his slow, weary way from early morn till late at night; and then he returns home to enjoy the repast prepared by his kind wife, and is glad to lie down to rest. At the close of the day the mechanic is glad to leave the clanking of tools and clatter of machinery to find a place to rest. Every person is born into this world, and engages in the battle of life; but sooner or later he finds a narrow resting place in the cold charnel-house of the grave.

All this means rest to the body; but the gift of Jesus is soul-rest—rest here, and rest up yonder. Toil, labor and travail are common to all men on earth; but in Heaven such terms are unknown, for, “*there is rest for the weary.*”

It was Jesus, the world’s Redeemer, who uttered the language of the text. All the children

of sinful Adam have been born into trouble, sorrow and wretchedness. They have ever proved themselves restless, discontented and unhappy. Jesus came into the world to remove the curse of sin, the cause of all this trouble; and to give rest to all who labor under the heavy burden of sin. This burden is upon all, but the gift of release and soul-rest, is offered to whosoever will come to Jesus and accept the blessing. This invitation plainly implies human agency, and the ability of any or all to come to Jesus, if they are so disposed. Jesus did not boast of His gifts and calling, as many of us do; but "made Himself of no reputation," and acted as the servant of all men. He did not invite the people to come unto Him, until, by words and acts, He had proven that He was both willing and able to give rest to the soul, or anything else He was pleased to promise. Just before He gave the broad invitation in the text, He had declared that God, His Father, had delivered all things into His hands; and that no man knew either Him or His Father, but that they alone mutually knew each other. But this was not a bare declaration, for His whole life had sufficiently proven to human intelligence that He was not a mere man, but the exact fulfillment of all the prophecies concerning the promised

Messiah. The preaching and writings of the apostles corroborate the testimony of the words and miracles of Jesus, and establish the fact beyond a doubt, that He was clothed with divine power, and did the very work that the prophets had said the Messiah should do.

Having addressed the people as rational free-men, and given sufficient testimony of His divine mission, He does not coerce, but invites them back to their natural element—the favor of God—that they may find rest to their souls. He did not tell them how they should come—whether by sea or land—whether they should walk, ride, or be carried by others. He does not say they should travel either south, north, east or west; nor that they should cross the Jordan, or any particular mountain. He did not invite them to Jerusalem, Mecca, or any particular city; nor did He say that all who come, must believe and know the same things; all be dressed in uniform, and stand just six feet three inches tall, and weigh precisely one hundred and forty-nine pounds. But He says COME, and I will give you rest. He does not refer us to another, but having all power, He says, I WILL give you rest.

Suppose two Jews in Galilee had decided to go to Jesus at Jerusalem for the promised rest. One of them hastens through Samaria, finds

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Jesus, claims, and obtains the blessing. The other, whose prejudice would not permit his passing through that despised country, crosses the Jordan, goes down on the other side, re-crosses, and goes up to Jerusalem, finds Jesus, and obtains the promised rest. But if he was like the prejudiced sectarians of our day, he would have said to the other: "You have not received the promised rest; you have no right to it, for you did not come like I did; you came through Samaria, that polluted country. You had better go back, and come again, that you may be sure you are relieved of your burden." The reader may smile at this illustration, but sectarian bigots everywhere are talking just about such ridiculous foolishness as this.

When Jesus was on earth, no two came to Him and made their requests known precisely in the same way. The leper said: "If thou wilt, thou canst make me clean." Jesus replied: "I will, (it) be thou clean." The blind men cried after Jesus; but after some apparent delay, He said unto them: "According to your faith, so be it unto you," and their eyes were opened. A certain woman fell down before Him, and implored Him to grant her request; but Jesus said to her that it was not good to take the children's bread and give it unto dogs. The wom-

insisted that the dogs were thankful for the crumbs that fell from the master's table. Her request was granted. Another woman said if she could only touch the hem of His garment she would be cured. She pressed her way through the crowd, touched, and was immediately made whole.

In the face of all these facts, who would dare say that there were any conditions except coming to Jesus in faith. All who came to Jesus, and exercised faith in Him, were blessed—not one single exception can be cited.

But Jesus was then on earth, in the flesh, and people could leave home, walk to Him, make their requests known, and obtain the desires of their hearts. But now He is not to be found among men. He has been glorified, and dwells in Heaven. We cannot walk to Him, neither will our improved methods of traveling carry us to Him. All the money of this world cannot pay the fare of one poor soul from earth to Heaven. Money may bring talented ministers from remote regions, but it cannot bring the Lord Jesus into our midst, as He was in Jerusalem, more than eighteen hundred years ago. He is now a glorified Spiritual Being, and we can only go to Him in spirit—in the mind, by faith.

We have already seen in the Essay on Salvation, that the coming to Christ, and being relieved of the burden of sin, is suspended on the condition of faith in God, through Christ, preceded by true repentance. We are justified by faith, and being justified, we have peace with God. "Whosoever believeth on Him shall receive remission of sins." "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved. We must believe the record that God has given of His son. God loved the world, and gave His Son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish but have everlasting life. The words and works of Jesus were recorded, that men might believe, and believing, that they might have life. But Jesus is the express image of God—the human manifestation of Jehovah—for "in Him dwelleth the God-head bodily," and He "is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity." Man is sinful, and cannot approach divine purity, without renouncing and forsaking his sins. We were born in sin, and it is our native home and cherished dwelling place. We cannot save ourselves from its dominion. But the Lord gives us power to repent—to leave this sinful home—and he calls us to Him, that we may be eased of this heavy burden, and brought into a state of at-one-ment with God. Being thus conjoined

with Him by faith, we partake of His nature, as a branch does of the vine, and become pure as He is pure.

Notwithstanding any person may be relieved from the burden of sin so easily, yet many hesitate, because there is such a diversity of opinions concerning some of the doctrines of Christianity. Thus, many are confused, and will not do even what they know to be right. But Jesus says: "Come unto me." Faith was the condition when He was in the flesh—not the manner of coming, nor what was done before and after. So it is yet; repentance must precede, and baptism may come before or after; but three-thirds of true religious faith, is the plainly expressed, only condition, of coming to Christ, and getting rid of the burden of sin. Christ is the door, the way, the truth and the life; and as there is only one condition, so all must enter this one door, travel the one way, reach the one truth, and enjoy the one life. There may be many opinions, as well as a diversity of operations, but there can be but one true faith, which unites us all with God, destroys the dominion of sin, and brings the peace of reconciliation.

If that poor woman had not touched the Savior's garment, she certainly would not have been cured. Even so a person may conclude

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that baptism by some peculiar mode is a prerequisite to the pardon of sins ; and unless this condition of his be either removed or complied with, the faith that brings salvation is evidently impossible. But when he honestly and sincerely does what he believes to be his duty, he may claim the blessing by faith, just like others. A person may have been taught from childhood that unless he confess his sin to a priest, the Lord will not remove its burden. He must be either taught better, or make the confession, or else the trinity of faith that brings the blessing is impossible. But when he goes and honestly and reverently confesses his sins, being truly penitent, he can then trust in the Lord to remove the burden ; and if he is perfectly sincere in all this, and has no mental reservations, he certainly is justified by faith, and has peace with God, just like a Methodist. Such persons cannot do any better, but when they, or any others, being truly penitent, are convinced and assured, and will trust in the Lord, they will be blessed ; for not one word that God hath spoken can pass without fulfillment.

When Jesus was in the flesh, as a man, he was only present at one place at one time. But having finished His Father's work here below, He said to His disciples : " It is needful that I go

a way, and send the Comforter unto you." Now if Jesus had remained on earth as man, poverty, and ten thousand other things, would hinder us from going to Him. But He was glorified, and has ascended to Heaven, and come again in the person of the Holy Spirit, and is thus omnipresent and approachable everywhere. He not only invites every burdened sinner to come to Him, but He is now represented as standing at every sinner's heart, knocking for admittance.

Dear reader, is this true? Do you feel sure of it? And are you burdened with a load of sin, and desire to get rid of it? Then accept this and the text as truth—act upon it—be willing, be anxious. Say in your heart: "Come in, Lord Jesus," and He will enter your heart, bind the strong man of sin, and cast him out, and you will find rest unto your soul. Do not wait because there are so many different opinions, but accept Jesus at once as your Almighty Savior, and begin to learn for yourself all you can about the Bible, the church and Christianity. The most important step in life is to get to Christ, to be freed from sin, and have rest for the soul.

From all this, we see there is but one way of coming to Christ, and that is the way of faith. But we can go nowhere without leaving somewhere. He who would go to his adopted home

in Heaven must leave his native home on earth—must die to self and the sinful world—be crucified with Christ, and reckoned buried with Him, that he may walk with God in newness of life. “There are diversities of gifts, but the same spirit;” “and there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all.” In this sin-smitten world, it is not probable that we will ever understand the truths of the Bible exactly alike; but all true Christians can and should, by a devout, religious faith, meet in Christ, and remain united in the one body by the holy bonds of Charity: “For by one spirit are we all baptized into one body; whether we be Jews or Gentiles, bond or free,” Methodist or Baptist, Protestant or Catholic, if Christians at all, “we all have been made to drink into one Spirit.” Not that any of these is exactly right in every particular; but if they have come to Christ by faith, and received the pardon of sins, and are made to drink into one spirit, they are all members of the one body, and quickened by the same life-giving power—Christ Jesus is their common Lord and Master, and they are all brethren. He who is not a member of the visible-body, certainly cannot be quickened and kept alive by the power of the spiritual body within. But the members of

Christ's body are not to be known by either creed, sect, or baptism, but by their love and care for each other—by their keeping the Lord's commandments—shunning evil and doing good—and by the exhibition in real life of the fruits of the Spirit—love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, meekness and faith.

There is certainly too much ado about acting and believing just as I do. Each one should walk by his own faith, not by the faith of another. If this is not the law of Christian life, surely we would have been informed exactly how to be baptized, and when and how everything else should be done. The little girl who was converted under the railroad bridge, went about shouting, and saying to others: "If you want to be converted, just get under the railroad bridge." Many, like the little maid, seem to think that the place and manner where and how they were blessed, is the best, if not the only way to the Savior. But such persons, if spiritual Christians at all, are evidently still in infancy, and under the influence of carnality. Some for Paul, some for Apollos; some for the Methodist, some for the Baptist; some for immersion, and some for effusion; but since God is not a respecter of persons, and makes no difference between the Jew and the Gentile, purifying each

one's heart by faith—what difference does it make if the life is hid with Christ in God, from whom all spiritual increase must come? "We are laborers together with God," and "are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone."

Then, dear sinner, turn and come to Jesus just now. O ! wanderer from God! come home, and be made a part of this spiritual building; not made with hands. Will you come ?

## SPECULATION.

### MELCHIZEDEK.

The name Melchizedek has been explained as "the justifier of those who dwell in Him." The word priest signifies one who acts as a mediator between men and God, and is essential to their mutual intercourse. But who or what has ever been necessary to man's intercourse with his Creator? What besides the Lord Jesus can be considered mediator, and *the justifier of those who dwell in Him?* the same to be a type of Christ and king of righteousness and peace perpetually.

This Melchizedek certainly could not have been a man, clothed with mortality, for he was without father and mother or beginning or ending of days. Abraham had been chosen as a peculiar friend and servant of God and was himself a priest, for he repeatedly built altars and offered sacrifices; therefore it is highly improbable that a mortal man would be permitted to come between him and God, as a priest. Had

he been a Canaanitish king, he certainly would have been interested in the result of the battle ; but the King of Sodom, only, manifested interest in the spoils and the persons re-captured. How could Abraham excuse himself for giving a tenth of all to Melchizedek, since he afterwards refused to accept anything at the hands of the King of Sodom ?

This priest of the Most High God certainly could not have been an angel, for then he would have been created and had a beginning of days. If an angel, he has certainly done the world very little good, for we know not that he ever acted as priest but once, and then for a single individual, and when it does not seem to have been necessary, for Abraham could have made the offering himself. Surely, then, we may conclude that this priest was neither a man nor an angel. Yet it is evident from Scripture that something personified as a man, and named Melchizedek ; was priest, at least, in the days of Abraham. St. Paul says of him, “he *liveth.*” He, like Christ, *abideth* a priest continually. Therefore we should look for him among the living—still exercising his priestly office.

“Without faith it is impossible to please God.” Here we see faith is *necessary* to our intercourse with God.

"Being justified by faith, we have peace with God." Here, then, is the *justifier* of men in the court of Heaven.

"By faith, Abel offered a more excellent sacrifice than Cain; by which he obtained witness that he was righteous." In this text, faith seems to be personified, spoken of as an agent, a priest and a mediator. It is represented as carrying the offering to Heaven and justifying Abel before the Almighty; and then as returning and bearing testimony to the acceptance of both the offering and himself; for "by it he obtained witness that he was righteous."

Again: "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God." Here God and man are represented as enemies, and, faith mediating, caused a treaty of peace to be signed. Abraham's faith brought about a special covenant between God and his family. It is by a continual active faith that the Christian remains in the favor of God. Surely, then, faith can be very appropriately termed King of Salem, which is King of Peace.

Abraham's faith was counted unto him for righteousness. The righteousness of God is now represented as being imputed without works, through faith in Christ Jesus. We frequently read of the righteousness of faith—that is, faith's righteousness, or that which is caused

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by it, or is imputed by or through it. Hence it appears that faith exercises a kingly authority over righteousness, and may therefore be considered king of righteousness, as well as king of peace.

Faith has neither father nor mother, beginning of days nor ending of years. It has ever been essential to man's intercourse with his Creator. It "abideth a priest" and a justifier "continually." The Kingdom of Heaven consisteth of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Ghost. Faith causes this kingdom to be established in the heart and reigns over it as king. Here, then, behold the mysterious Melchizedek, who from the worldly side, is man's justifier—the king of righteousness, and the king of peace.

But Melchizedek met Abraham, and blessed him, and brought forth bread and wine. Well, the word brought means to cause to come, to cause the obtaining of, as well as to come and bring. Now, the excitement of the battle being over, Abraham is made to contemplate the goodness of God; and bread and wine are brought, that the soldiers may be refreshed and mutual friendship shown between all present. His faith in the promises of God being brought into lively exercise, he considers the battle and victory the Al-

mighty's; and this faith as the great high priest and representative of Almighty God, demands that an acknowledgement of divine presence and assistance be made by offering a tenth of all the spoils. It has ever been a custom in war for the spoils taken in battle to belong to the victors. But in this battle God and men were confederate; and Abraham had no right to dispose of the Lord's share of the spoils. This, it seems, is why he offered a tenth of all, without consulting the King of Sodom. The remaining nine-tenths were his own, but he chose to turn it all over to the King of Sodom.

We are informed that while the Jewish priests were subject to death, Melchizedek was not. (See Heb., 7-8.) He was made like Jesus—"abideth a priest continually." Christ was made a priest after His order—that is, "after the power of an endless life." (See ver. 16 and 17.) The ancients delighted in parables, symbols and dark sayings, and names with them signified either quality or office, and sometimes both. Therefore, from all that has been said, it seems highly probable that the mysterious Melchizedek is a synonym for the triune faith.

## THE GARDEN OF EDEN.

We learn from verses 29 and 30 of the first chapter of Genesis that the food of man, beasts and creeping things was the same—"every herb and the fruit of every tree on the face of the WHOLE EARTH." From these verses we may also reasonably infer that the territory occupied by man was the same on which the beasts and creeping things were to feed and live. This will appear more evident when we consider what is said in the 26th verse of the same chapter; where we are told that man was to have dominion over all the animal creation, over all the earth. Then certainly man was not in a small inclosure, called a garden, and the other creatures extended therefrom; for then how could they all eat the same food and man exercise dominion over all these inferior creatures?

In the second chapter we are informed that God planted a garden, eastward in Eden, in which man was placed, but at the same time he was monarch of the whole earth. The sum of all this seems to be as follows: God

created the plants, trees and herbs and set them growing all over the dry land, and called the whole face of the earth a garden.

The chaotic state of the earth was horrible—*without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep.* When, however, there was light and the dry land appeared, though bare, it was greatly improved, but not a suitable and pleasant home for man. But when the green trees, plants and herbs were set growing all over the dry land—all loaded with luxuriant fruit—then the earth being so bountifully supplied, became a suitable and delightful abode for man. The whole face of the earth was then so grandly decorated, we should not be surprised that it obtained a new name; and where could a more appropriate one have been found than Eden, which means pleasure or delight.

This Eden was beautifully set with fruit trees, plants, herbs and many other good things, and no thorns, briars and thistles were permitted to grow in this vast domain; then, surely, no one will object to calling it a garden. So it seems natural that these two words should be thus joined, and we have the Garden of Eden.

The garden was eastward in Eden. The ancients considered the earth a flat surface, and it is probable that Moses simply meant the east-

ern part of this plane ; or, as we would now say, the Eastern Hemisphere.

"A river went out of Eden to water the garden ; and from thence it was parted and became into four heads."

It is a remarkable fact that no such river was ever known, which leads us to suspect that it should not be understood literally. God's thoughts and ways are superior to ours, and all His works are executed upon a grand and extended scale. Therefore we should not only expect His garden to extend from sea to sea, but the river which supplies it with moisture to be proportionally large.

Physical geography informs us that the center of Asia is like a vast flat roof, which pours its water off in four directions. Now, by making some allowance for change of sea coast, and the appearance of more dry land, we certainly may plausibly conjecture that these four grand divisions of rain-fall upon the eastern hemisphere will answer to the four heads of the river. By supposing Hindeostan to have formerly been called Havilah, we may readily conclude that Pison, or the first river, means all the water that flowed into the China, Bengal and Arabian seas ; and thus the whole land of Havilah was compassed by this water. (See Gen., 2-11.)

Gihon, the second river, compassed the whole land of Ethiopia (which, perhaps, included all of Africa) and it probably means all the water which flowed into the Red and Mediterranean seas. Thus the whole land of Ethiopia was surrounded. Hiddekel flowed "toward the east of Assyria," and probably refers to all the water which flowed out between east and north; and Euphrates included the remaining water shed, that is, all the water which flowed out between north and west.

That these were not literal rivers is quite evident; for who ever heard of a river that flowed all around any country!!

When sin had cursed, not only the human family, but the whole earth, and when thorns and thistles, and their kindred vegetation, began to put forth spontaneously all over the face of the earth, and when its delight, pleasure and beauty were destroyed, it no longer could be appropriately called The Garden of Eden.

## **WATER BAPTISM.**

The subject of water baptism has, unquestionably, been one of the greatest causes of sectarian division and strife in the Christian church almost from its very beginning. This has ever been the battle-ground of the most desperate struggles of Christian, civil logomachy. The enemy has certainly often taken advantage of this state of affairs to surprise and defeat the Christian army. While Christians have been so zealously engaged in civil or internal warfare over water baptism, they have not only failed to be properly aggressive toward the enemy, but not being wide awake and on their guard, the foe have frequently been the aggressors, and done great damage throughout the territory of Christianity. A great deal of time, money and talent have evidently been unnecessarily expended on this subject. The command was to go and preach the Gospel, and baptize; but with many, it seems, this has been, to a great extent, reversed. They wrangle about the mode of baptism, and neglect the more weighty and important doctrines of the Gospel.

Something is certainly wrong in Christian warfare, for it is quite evident that Christianity has lost its primitive purity and power; and it is highly probable that the sectarian strife about water baptism, and its different modes, together with other subordinate subjects, is the great cause of the sad decline, seen and deplored everywhere. If this difficult problem could have been solved, surely all the talent, piety, ignorance and superstition brought to bear upon it would have long ago settled it forever. But it is still an open question, and will, doubtless, ever so remain.

Now, since God is our Father, and has infinite love for His children, and as all Scripture is given by inspiration, and there is a sufficiency for profitable doctrine and knowledge; and since the mode and design of water baptism is not clearly revealed; therefore we have the best of reasons for concluding that these things are either (or both) of minor importance, or that it is best for each one, as an intelligent, free man, to avail himself of the general information within his reach, and then act according to his own faith—for he should walk by faith, not by sight, since he has no positive order or instructions on the subject.

The Jews, as servants and minor heirs, under

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the old covenant, were told exactly how to perform almost every duty; but Christians, as the Lord's freemen, are not so instructed; however, we are plainly told that they should walk by faith. This accounts for the difference of tone in the writings of the Old and New Testaments. Champions in the baptism warfare appeal to the Christian Fathers for proof of their position; but invariably they obtain too much for any of them. These witnesses testify that infants were baptized, but on cross examination, they state that they were immersed, and further, that all this was done to remove the pollution of original guilt, (and actual sins, if any had been committed,) and in order to the child's salvation. Some of them went so far as to advise that children should not be baptized until they were about grown, fearing they might sin after baptism, there being no other way of getting rid of the guilt of sin. So we see the most learned, even of the early Christian ages, must have been greatly confused on the subject of water baptism.

Debaters on this subject have ever appealed to Latin, Greek and Hebrew lexicons; and also to ancient and modern histories; each one finds enough circumstantial evidence to keep his guessing machine going, but he only accepts what will corroborate his own pet theory; he

destroys what he can of the rest, and leaves the remainder for his opponents. In this way the combatants receive fresh supplies of ammunition, and thus the sacrilegious church logomachy is perpetuated. "Behold, every man's sword was against his fellow, and there was a very great discomfiture." "But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another."

When appeal is made directly to the New Testament, we discover the same Babylonish confusion; and the greatest strength of all the arms and ammunition of each soldier, like the Philistines, is hurled against his fellow. The Christian world has ever been divided on the design, mode and subjects of water baptism. One party is of the opinion that unless the sacrament is administered, no one, not even an infant, can get rid of the curse of sin and be received into Heaven. But this opinion is most certainly wrong; for it is not only without Scripture foundation, but is evidently sacrilegious, and derogatory to the holy character of God, our Father. For surely no earthly parent would punish a child for not performing a task which he was wholly incapable of accomplishing, or of which he was entirely ignorant. Then is it not impious and irreverent to attribute an act infinitely

more severe to our kind Heavenly Father? No one can estimate how much more willing and anxious God is to do good to His creatures than an earthly parent to give good things to his children. But one faction of this party admit that infants and idiots may be saved without this rite; but they contend that there is no promise of the pardon of sins to others without it. They appeal to Acts, 2-38, for proof to sustain this opinion: "Repent, and be baptized every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins." They guess that Peter there meant water baptism, but it is highly probable that he did not. The Savior had commanded the apostles to baptize in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; but Peter upon this occasion exhorted the people to be baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. If this name comprehends the other two, why were they commanded to baptize into the three names? John the Baptist, who also was filled with the Holy Ghost, preached the baptism of repentance "for the remission of sins," and if Peter preached water baptism "for the remission of sins," then, they being filled with the Holy Ghost, must have preached opposite doctrines. But if Peter meant that these enquirers should repent and be baptized (in the passive

voice) with the baptism of repentance, then these two texts of scripture are harmonized and the force of neither is destroyed. This being true, and there not being a parallel text in the whole Bible, it is certainly much more reasonable to suppose that Peter meant the baptism of repentance than any other. Several kinds of baptism are spoken of in the New Testament and as neither the language nor surrounding circumstances in this instance decide which is meant, we are left to conjecture and inferential evidence. Paul was commanded to arise and be baptized and wash away his sins, calling on the name of the Lord. But by examining the parallel texts it will be seen that his eyes had already been opened, and he had received the Holy Ghost before he was baptized, and therefore it is highly improbable that this sacrament had anything to do with the pardon of his sins. The above is Paul's own language when relating his experience, and he appears simply to refer to this rite as the visible, dividing line between his Christian and former life. By this public act he severed himself from Judaism and united with the persecuted disciples, that each party might know just where he then stood.

Being convinced and assured that Jesus was the Christ, and yielding and putting his trust in

Him, his sins were certainly pardoned by faith according to his own teaching to others before he was filled with the Holy Ghost. This was known both by the Lord and himself; yet it was proper by this visible sign to make known to men this great change in his life and thus put off or wash away his sins, or former life, at the beginning of the new life in Christ Jesus. In every other place in the New Testament where this rite is referred to, the reader must certainly do some wild guessing to even suppose its observance essential to the pardon of sins, for there are so many places where we see this blessing offered and received on the simple and only condition of faith, preceded by repentance; and not a word said about water baptism. (See Essay on Salvation.)

There are others who contend that candidates entering the church should be baptized, because their sins are pardoned. With them, none but those who repent, believe and profess conversion, or re-generation, have a right to be baptized and be received in the Christian church, hence they reject infant membership and their baptism. These two last-mentioned parties play upon the word "for"; the former contend that it means "in order to," and the latter, "because of." The truth is, it is sometimes used in the former

and sometimes in the latter sense; while in other connections it simply means "because." We should judge of its meaning by the office it performs in the sentence. The party last referred to say this rite is a door into the visible church, and should symbolize the death and burial of our Lord. They do not, however, tell us where they are authorized to execute this symbol, nor do they attempt to explain the absurdity of being a member of the spiritual body, but not of the visible church.

There is still another party who explain the design of this sacrament as an outward sign of an inward work of grace, whether it be administered before or after re-generation. With them it is a visible mark or sign of citizenship in Christ's Kingdom, and takes the place of circumcision in the Jewish church. Therefore they advocate both infant baptism and membership. They usually assume this to be true without attempting to prove it, but should they succeed in establishing this position, we could readily see why male children should be baptized—but we would certainly still be without either scripture or logic to require or justify the baptism of female infants. If females were recognized members in the Jewish church without any visible sign or mark, we logically

infer from the premises lain down that they should not be baptized at all. But it is objected, further, that infants cannot repent and believe, and therefore they were not included in the general commission; for under it the promise is to those who believe and are baptized. Being already fit subjects for Heaven—needing no repentance and not being capable of believing in the Lord Jesus Christ—their baptism is not only superfluous, but wrong.

Now, some of these contending parties have unquestionably mistaken the design of water baptism, and perhaps all of them are wrong, in some particulars at least.

There is sharper contention about the mode, but perhaps not such a great diversity of opinion as about the design of baptism. A few boldly assert that this sacrament of the church should invariably be administered by effusion—either sprinkling or pouring. They say the water should be poured upon the candidate, to symbolize the pouring out of the spirit upon the people, which is called baptism. Further, they argue that effusion must be the true mode, because the prophet speaks of Jesus as sprinkling many nations; and further, as this is found in the last verse of the chapter preceding the one the eunuch was reading when Phillip preached to him. They

infer that the eunuch must have gotten his idea of baptism from that verse. (See Is., 5-3.) They play upon the preposition "with." John baptized *with* water; therefore they say he must have applied the water to the subject. We fell a tree *with* an ax—we apply the ax to the tree, not the reverse.

There are others who say baptism is something to be done, and that it may be performed either by immersion, sprinkling or pouring. They say baptism means "to wash," and it does not matter how it is performed, so the work is done. They, like all the rest, refer to dictionaries and histories to prove their position. They show from the lexicons that the original word for baptism has many definitions, and they prove from histories that all along the Christian centuries this sacrament has been administered in different ways. They infer from texts in the New Testament, where this rite is spoken of, that it was sometimes performed by immersion and sometimes by effusion. But it is certainly quite clear that they, like every one else, are forced to rely for proof of their position upon inference and conjecture.

But there are a great many who boldly assert that nothing will do for Christian baptism except the immersion of truly converted persons

in water by a proper administrator. They appeal to lexicons to prove that immersion is at least the first and most important definition of the original word for baptism. They show from history that this mode has been recognized and practiced ever since the beginning of the Christian era. They contend, further, that this was the only mode practiced during the first two or three centuries. They infer, or guess, that John the Baptist practiced only this mode—because he preached near the river—because Christ, after baptism, came up straightway out of the water—because he preached in Enon, where there was much water. But the objectors reply—John baptized *with* water—straightway does not mean straight up, but simply immediately—John at first baptized in Bathabara, beyond Jordan—and further, that John could not have immersed so many in so short a time. They conjecture, as they think with much certainty, that Phillip immersed the eunuch because they both went down into the water and came up out of the water. But the objector replies: “They went down from the carriage into the place where the water was, and I guess Phillip baptized him *with* water by pouring it on his head, just as John did; or else he was sprinkled, as the prophet which he had just been reading, said Christ would do.”

This party exultingly refer to the sixth chapter of Romans for positive proof that immersion is the true mode of water baptism. They quote: "Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death." They frequently quote in this connection: "*Arise* to walk in newness of life," but the *arise* is not found here. They claim that this is positive proof that baptism is a burial, and therefore immersion is the true mode. The objector suggests that they make a very wild conjecture to even think of water baptism in this place. St. Paul says: "We *are* buried"—*now*, at this very time. Don't you think he must have had water-proof parchment to write on, or he would have gotten it wet if he was then—while writing—buried under the water? Besides, he says we are buried *by baptism*, not by a preacher; it was unto death—this baptism kills. He adds, "*walk* in newness of life"—not *arise* to walk. The subject of this whole chapter excludes the idea of water.

This baptism carries us into Christ. Elsewhere we are told: "By one spirit are we all baptized into one body." This must be the baptism referred to, for Paul includes himself in both places. In 1 Cor., 12, 13, we are told plainly that the spirit baptism carries us into Christ; but in Romans we are not told what kind of

baptism is meant, but the only reasonable inference is that it is the same as the other. The objector further insists that this burial certainly has reference to the exhortation of the apostle recorded elsewhere: "Reckon yourselves dead indeed unto the world"—that is, be completely absorbed in the Christian work and warfare, "always abounding in the work of the Lord."

But the exclusive immersionist makes another appeal to Col., 2-12: "Buried with Him in baptism." But the objector replies that this burial is *in baptism*, not *in the water*. Besides, this is evidently a substantial repetition of the preceding verse, where it is called, "the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh," and certainly can have no reference to water baptism.

Finally they quote: "One Lord, one Faith, one Baptism." From this they infer that there is but one baptism; and as nearly all admit that immersion is baptism, this must be the one referred to. But the objector replies—there are several baptisms, but the apostle was evidently speaking of the one by which we are all baptized. (See 1 Cor., 12-13.) The subject is Christian life—the unity and influence of the Spirit. Immersion is an unreasonable guess. Who informed you that the other baptisms are all done

away with? In Hebrews we find the word in its plural sense—"baptisms." (See Heb., 6-2.)

From all that has been said on this subject, it is quite evident that if the design and mode of water baptism ever was clear, it is not so now. We find that each contending party has at least some circumstantial evidence justifying their opinions and practice concerning this sacrament of the Christian church. It would be very uncharitable not to conclude that each of these schools contain very pious and learned men and women, who are sincerely seeking after truth and endeavoring to do the will of God. Doubtless we will never see things exactly alike in this sin-smitten world; but being all baptized into the one body by the one spirit we should endeavor to keep the unity of this one spirit in the bond of peace. Christian charity will enable its possessor to endure kindly the harsh criticism of those who differ from himself. Then, since not only the ignorant and worldly-minded, but the most pious and learned of all Christendom differ on the design and mode of water baptism, should we not infer that our Father in His kind providence, has so provided instruction on this subject that each sincere seeker after truth and holiness might, according to his own ability as an intelligent, free man, avail

himself of the general instruction within his reach and walk according to his own faith and understanding? This is certainly a charitable consideration of the subject, and surely no one will consider it too liberal. Then it is not necessary to say one to another: "Know the Lord," "believe as I do" or "do as I have done." Each member of the one body should perform his own peculiar work and contribute to the well-being of all the rest. The hand cannot do the work of the feet, nor can the ear perform the functions of the eye, neither can persons of different mental capacity and opportunities believe, understand and act exactly alike. A human being is, to a great extent, a creature of circumstances. Natural ability, educational advantages and surrounding circumstances have much to do in forming one's faith and directing the course of life. The mental and spiritual capacity and powers of a human being are like melted lead—they take shape from the moulds in which they are cast. Infinite justice certainly will not condemn a Hindoo because he does not know and believe what Christians do. A person born and educated under Catholic influence is likely to remain in that faith unless he be taken out from under that influence, melted down and then moulded over. Each of the sects is exer-

cising a similar moulding power over all who are under their influence. He who willingly places himself in any sectarian or political mould and cheerfully remains there will certainly in a very short time take the proper shape. Surely few close observers have failed to see this fact demonstrated before their eyes. Even learned and pious men, of high party spirit, getting into some trouble with their own sect or party, will gradually recede and finally unite with another, and soon be as true as steel in their new home. True, people sometimes change without any help from the old home folks, but this should be considered the exception, not the rule. Many do not endorse their sectarian creed, but still they will not forsake the old home and follow the example of St. Paul.

The sum of the whole matter, then, appears to be that each should be perfectly sincere—honest with his God, his fellows and himself—learn as much as possible and ever believe and do the very best he can. Difference of opinion, then, is a natural consequence and each Christian should be filled with that charity which covers a multitude of faults. Then let each Christian and each sect as willingly recognize the church rights and privileges of others as they are to allow each family to dwell in their

own home and have their own peculiar domestic arrangements. When this desideratum shall have united the contending parties in the bond of peace, the lamb and the lion may lie down together and the war in Heaven will certainly be brought to a close.

But, after all, party prejudice has doubtless darkened this subject; and if each one would divest himself of all bias, the blessings of the millennial day would soon reveal things in a clearer light. It is highly probable that one cause of the great diversity of opinion on the subject of water baptism is attributable to the fact that few, if any, trace its history from its origin as a church ordinance. This rite is abruptly introduced in the New Testament, without either comment or apology for the innovation. The people wanted to know of John the Baptist why he was baptizing, if he was neither the Christ nor the prophet; which plainly implies that they were familiar with both the design and mode of baptism, as he was administering the ordinance. They were evidently expecting both Christ and His fore-runner to initiate their disciples in this way. Had this rite been entirely new to them, the administrator doubtless would have explained all about it, and they certainly would have asked a great many questions if they were

like men of the present day. But not a single explanation nor inquiry is recorded; therefore we may reasonably conjecture that they were perfectly familiar with this church ordinance.

Now we learn from Jewish writings that water baptism, as an initiatory rite, had been practiced in the Jewish church since the return from the Babylonish captivity. Notwithstanding this positive instruction to worship at Jerusalem, yet at the time referred to they commenced building synagogues all over the country, and worship in these buildings continued, not only till Christ came, but even to the present day. So far as we know, they did this without divine instruction. They proselyted the Gentiles and brought them into their church. They required these converts to be baptized. Each adult waded into the water and immersed himself, while the proselyte stood on the bank of the stream. The priest took the infant and small children, if any, and immersed them. Then the whole family was considered in the church; but the children born unto these parents after this were not baptized. Thus this rite was practiced in every synagogue when a Gentile family was brought into the church. The original design of this ordinance, as performed by the Jews, seems to have been simply a visible

sign or public declaration of the change from idolatry to the worship of the God of the Jews. It was the dividing line between the two religions. Just so when the Indians would initiate Captain John Smith into their tribe, they carried him into the water to wash the white man's blood out of him. At the command of God, Abraham left his native country, traveled westward and crossed over the river Euphrates; and his return was forbidden. He took a new name. The people there called him Hebrew—that is, the man who crossed over the river. Just so, the Gentiles crossed over the river, or line, by submitting to the ordinance of baptism; and ever afterwards he was called a Jew. If the Jewish writings can be accredited, this is why the ordinance of water baptism was frequently practiced for several centuries before the appearance of John the Baptist. If John was using this ordinance according to the national custom, the silence before spoken of is readily accounted for.

That this rite has ever been used as a sign of a change of mind or of faith, seems evident from the baptism for the dead. Even the most pious are overwhelmed with sorrow when a relative or friend dies; but finally they fix their minds on the promised resurrection, and receive comfort

—they undergo a change of mind, and become reconciled—and are thus baptized for the dead. The Israelites at the Red Sea were baptized unto Moses. They had lost confidence in him; but the Sea was divided, and while passing through, they underwent a change of mind—from enmity to that of confidence and friendship. How else could they be baptized unto Moses, in the cloud and in the sea?

If John baptized according to the Jewish custom, there is no mystery about his baptizing so many in a short time. He preached the Kingdom of Heaven at hand, and required at least a promise of repentance. All who believed his preaching, went in mind from the Jewish to the new faith; and according to their custom, he could signify this change by immersing himself. Every time they underwent a change of faith or religion, they were baptized to signify the change. When Jesus began to preach, all of John's disciples who believed must have undergone another change of faith. John baptized into the faith of the kingdom near at hand. Those who went over to Christ must have been baptized into the faith of the kingdom already come, and that Jesus is the Christ. The people of Jerusalem and round about Jordan, were all baptized of John. From the whole tenor of the Gospels, we

infer that at least a large majority of the Jews received baptism of him. But we are informed that Jesus baptized more disciples than he. Neither of them baptized any but Jews. Now if John baptized even a small majority, Christ must have re-baptized His disciples, to receive more than he. In the nineteenth chapter of Acts we see plainly that some of John's disciples were re-baptized. This theory explains the household baptisms, and why the apostles baptized only in the name of the Lord Jesus every time, as recorded in the New Testament. These persons were already believers in God, and their faith was only changed in respect to the Lord Jesus—hence the different formula. The first commission was to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. These all having been baptized, or, at least, had the refusal of the Gospel before our Lord was resurrected, the general commission probably has reference alone to the Gentile world. They knew neither the Father, the Son, nor the Holy Ghost, but when convinced, and brought over to the Christian faith, they should be baptized according to this general commission, to signify their change to the new faith in the three names. If this is not a reasonable supposition, why is every recorded case of baptism in the name of Jesus only?

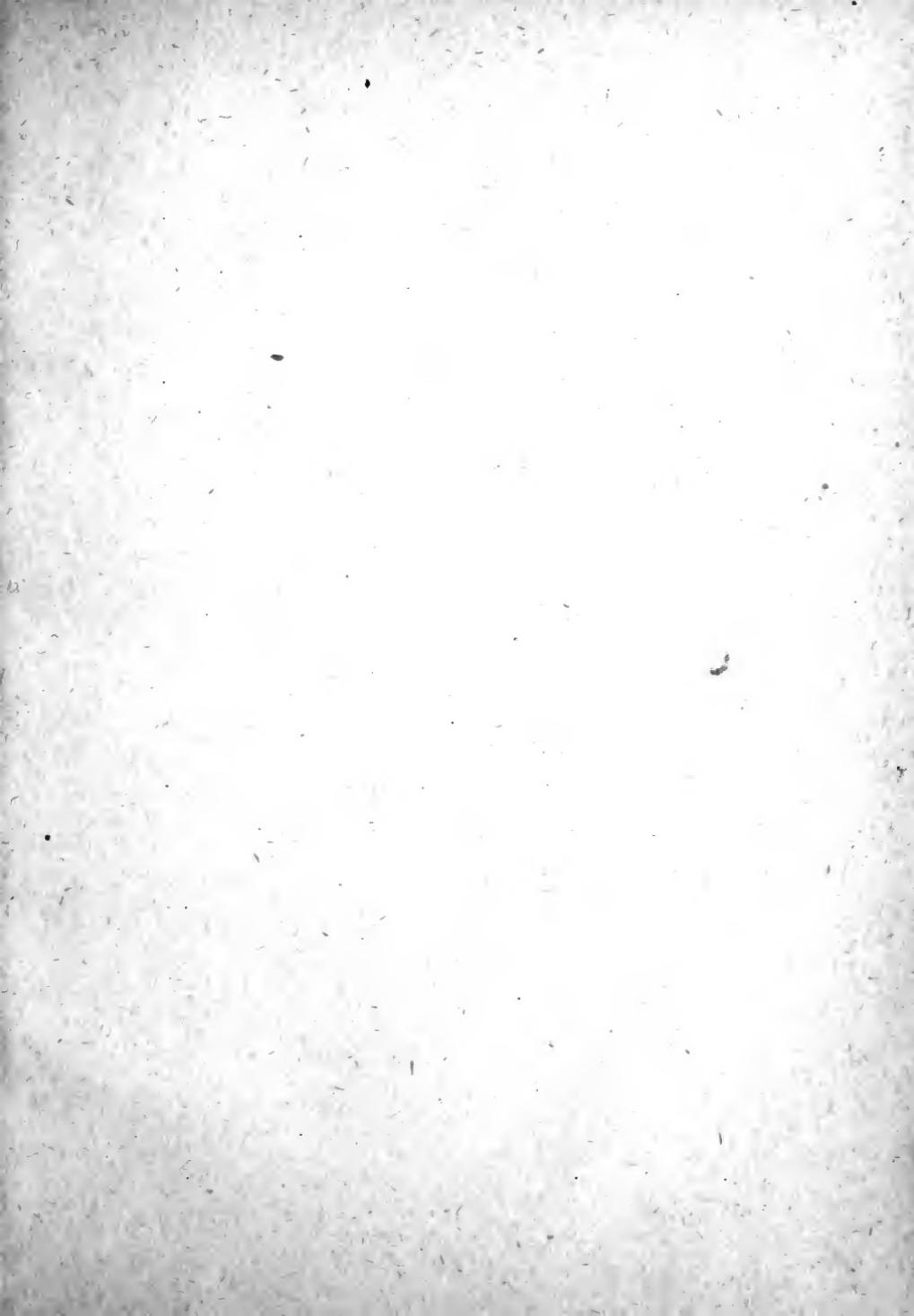
St. Paul substantially tells us that a child is holy if either parent is a Christian. Now he evidently means no more than that the child is a member of the church by birth, and will be brought up in the faith of the Gospel, and no change will be necessary, and therefore no baptism should ever be administered. We are informed in history that some of the Christian Fathers were elected bishops before they ever received water baptism. This seems to indicate that their parents knew they did not need this sacrament, any more than a child needed it who was born unto Gentile parents after their initiation into the Jewish church. By the time, however, that these bishops were old, the whole church had receded so much from primitive purity and simplicity—and they were all quite superstitious about water baptism—it is quite probable that there was much clamor on the subject, and the old bishops were forced to submit to the ordinance.

Now some able divines contend that our water baptism is a continuation of the ordinance practiced by the Jews; and perhaps after all the continued clamor on the subject, the truth, if ever discovered, may eventually be traced from this source. The Jews seemed to understand that this rite was a sign of a change of faith, and did

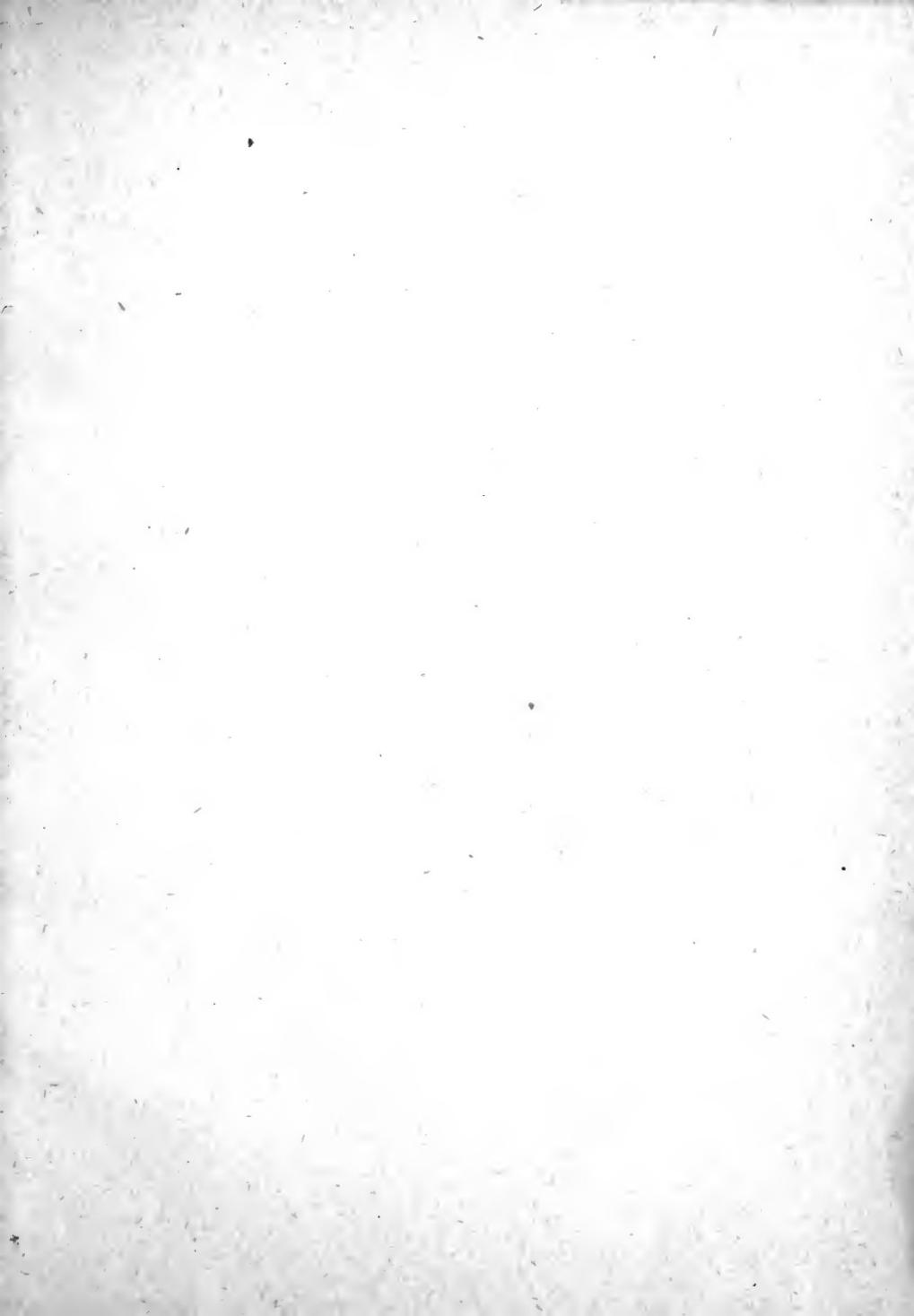
not therefore hesitate to submit to John's baptism, when they believed his preaching. Why, then, should the child of a Christian be baptized at all? If the child be properly taught, he will believe in Christ from infancy, and of course no change of faith is necessary, and therefore no baptism. He is a member of the visible church by birth, as also, of civil government. The children born unto a proselyte after his initiation into the Jewish church were not baptized, but the males were circumcised; therefore it seems probable that the children of Christians do not need baptism, but only regeneration. It certainly cannot be proved from Scripture that any one born unto Christian parents, and brought up under their influence, ever received water baptism. Then since there are at least so many speculative reasons favoring this solution of the difficult problem, and not a single text of Scripture opposing it—perhaps after all, the Christian world has improperly perpetuated this rite until it has become a kind of idol, like circumcision in the Jewish church.

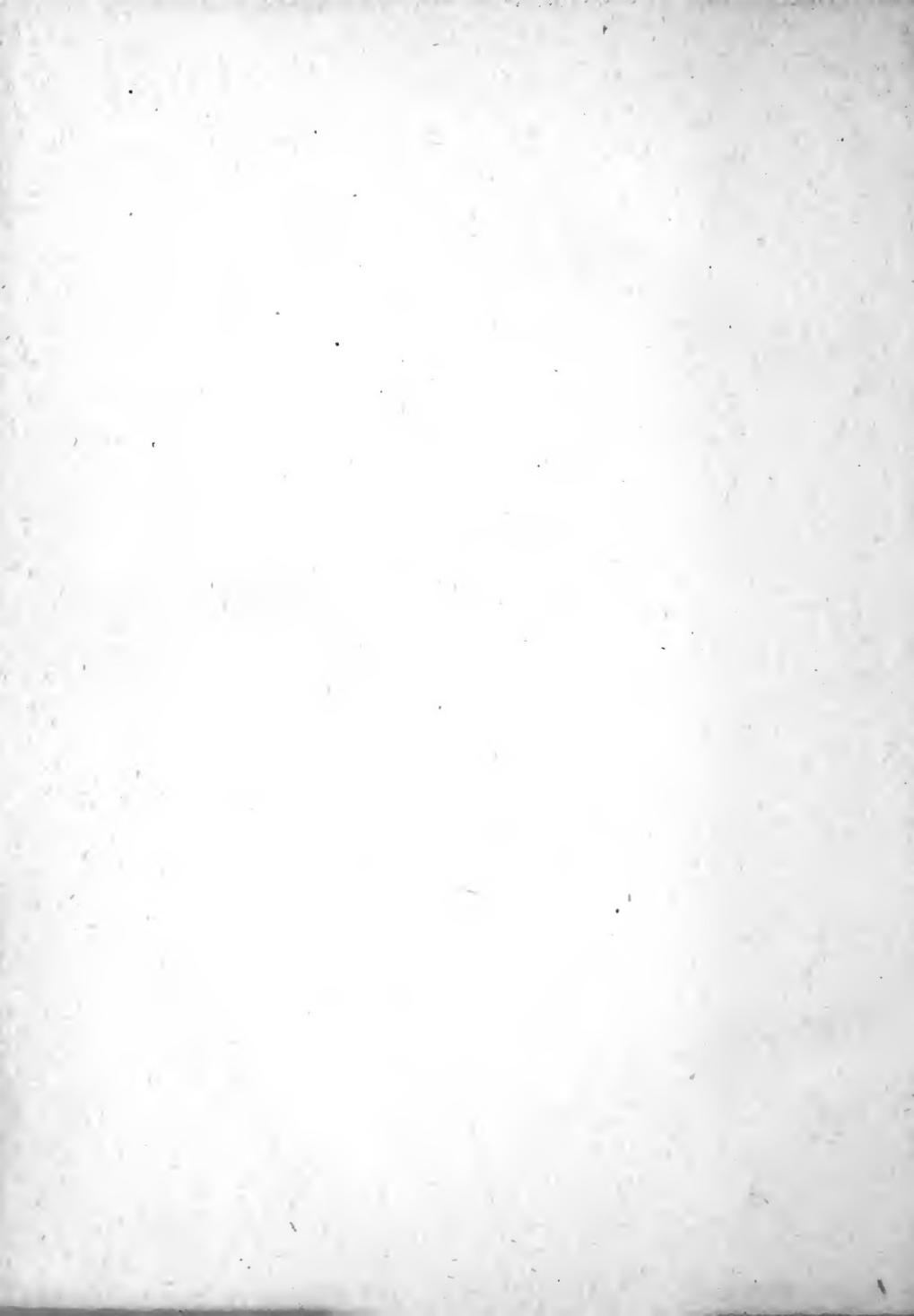
THE END.

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